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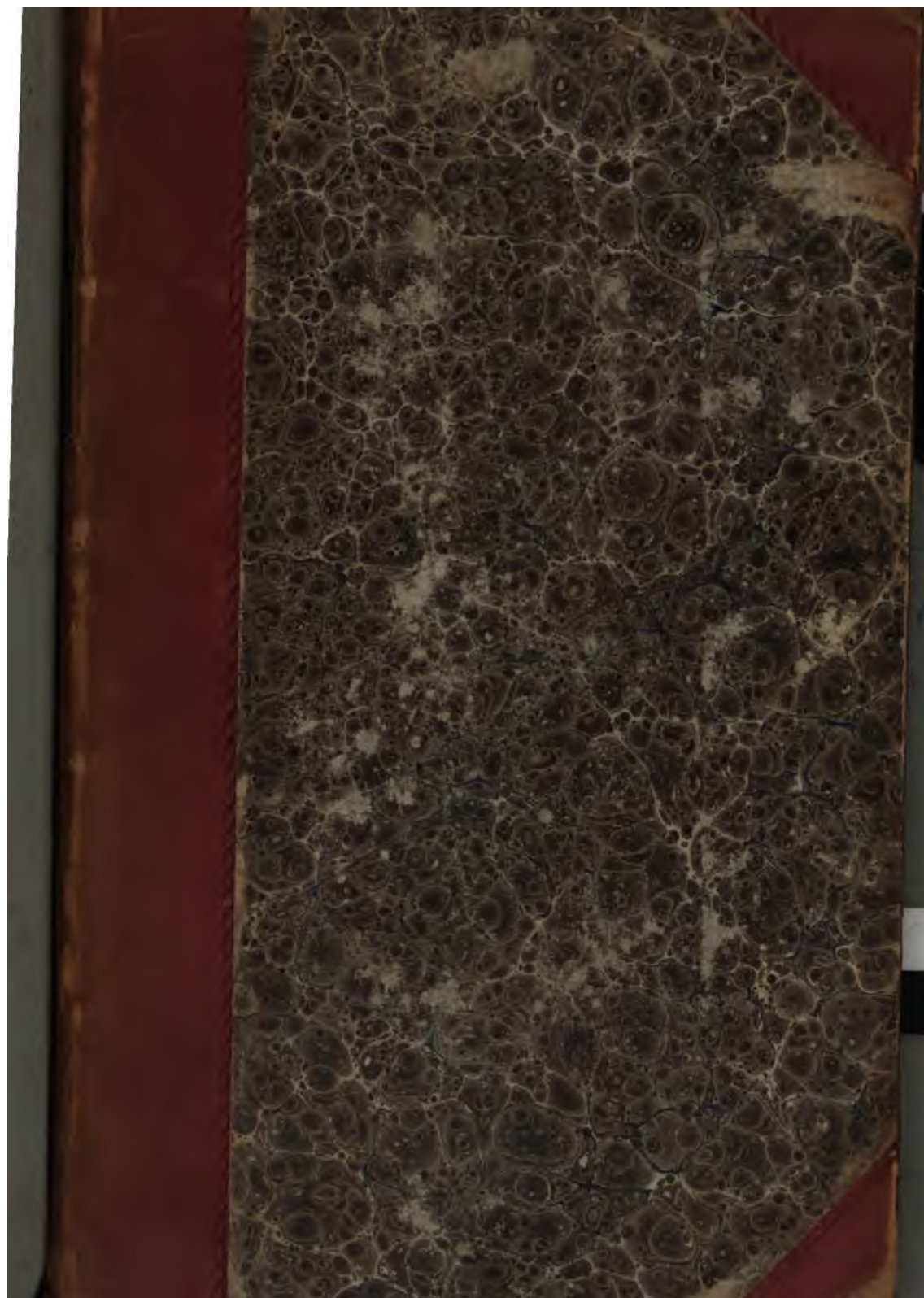
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1829.
LETTERS TO THE JEWS;

PARTICULARLY ADDRESSED TO

MR. LEVY OF FLORIDA:

WITH

A COPY OF A SPEECH,

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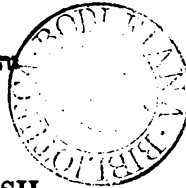
AT A MEETING OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS,

IN LONDON, IN MAY, 1828:

**DEDICATED TO THE PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS OF THE LONDON
SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIANITY AMONG THE JEWS.**

החברו כורעך כל נוי הארץ :

Genesis xxii. 18.



BY THOMAS THRUSH,

LATE A CAPTAIN IN THE ROYAL NAVY.

YORK:

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1829.

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TO THE
PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS
OF THE LONDON SOCIETY,

FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIANITY AMONG THE JEWS.

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

THOUGH it may appear not only presumptuous, but also at variance with established custom, to dedicate to you, and without your permission, Letters addressed to others; yet, regarding you as the constituted national patrons and instructors of the Jews, there can surely be no impropriety, in a friend to the cause in which you are so honourably engaged, recommending the following Letters to your notice, if not to your patronage.

If there should be any thing in them likely to forward your benevolent view, it may, through your aid, receive additional weight. If, on the contrary, these Letters should contain any thing likely to impede your plans, you may, by exposing the fallacy of the principles they advocate, counteract what you may deem their evil tendency.

Considering the melancholy state of *gross darkness* and crime in which Christians, as well as Pagans, have lived for a long series of ages, neither laws nor religion having been

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Considering the melancholy state of *gross darkness* and crime in which Christians, as well as Pagans, have lived for a long series of ages, neither laws nor religion having been

able to avert crime: considering, also, the ascertained fact, from prophecy, that the Sons of Israel are the divinely appointed religious instructors of *Gentile* nations; * the wisdom and humanity of your Society become equally conspicuous: and, among the many religious and philanthropic societies established of late years, yours presents strong claims to public patronage and support:

On the elevated ground you occupy, as the teachers and instructors of those who are the divinely appointed instructors of the whole Gentile world, it is peculiarly necessary that you should ascertain whether the ground you occupy is firm and tenable; whether you can lay before the Jews such a statement of Christian doctrines, and also a copy of the Christian and Jewish Scriptures, so correct, as to enable you boldly to address them in the language of our Saviour: "If ye hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will ye be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

Believing that in the seed of Abraham all the nations of the earth will *finally* be blessed; believing, with you, that the conversion of the Jews must precede that of the Gentiles; anticipating the same happy and glorious result as yourselves from this conversion, namely, the peace and amelioration of the whole world; agreeing in so many particulars, I can surely stand in no need of apology for dedicating these Letters to you.

* See a Sermon preached before the London Society for promoting Christianity among the Jews, April 18th, 1822; by the Rev. George Stanley-Faber, B. D.

As our most gracious Sovereign, aided by the counsels of enlightened and humane ministers, is strengthening the bonds of social union, by the removal of civil disabilities from all Christians on account of their religious opinions; permit me respectfully, yet earnestly, to recommend to your Society to interest itself in obtaining the same favour for our Jewish brethren.—Permit me, with equal respect and earnestness, to entreat you to endeavour to obtain for them admission into our two national universities. Christianity is assuredly founded upon a rock, and could not, therefore, be endangered by their admission. If you really believe that they are destined to convert Gentile nations to Christianity, it surely is not only expedient, but a positive duty to afford them the very best means of obtaining Christian instruction, and such a measure would powerfully co-operate with the Jewish schools you have so laudably established.

Sincerely wishing, with you, the conversion of the Jews to the religion of Jesus Christ, as soon, and by whatever means it may please the Almighty to accomplish his purpose, I subscribe myself,

My LORDS and GENTLEMEN,

Your most obedient

and humble Servant,

THE AUTHOR.

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LETTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark : but it shall be one day which shall be known to the LORD, not day, nor night : but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light. And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem, half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea : in summer and in winter shall it be. And the LORD shall be king over all the earth : in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one.”—*Zech. xiv. 6—9.*

SIR,

INTENDING to address your countrymen on the subjects contained in the following Letters, I read with great pleasure, in a public paper,* a speech said to have been delivered by you at a Meeting of Jews and Christians in London, in the month of May last. The benevolent and enlightened principles you therein express, have induced me to address my Letters to you *individually*, as well as to your brethren *generally*; a liberty I trust you will readily excuse, though personally a stranger to you, as I am to almost every individual of your nation. Thus circumstanced, I think I need not apologise for troubling

* See the *WORLD Newspaper*, of May 28, 1828.

you with a short account of the person who is now venturing publicly to address you and your brethren, on a subject, of all others, the most important to the temporal and eternal welfare of all mankind.

During a considerable portion of a life, now fast approaching to the common period allotted to man, I have served in the British Navy, in which I attained the rank of a Captain nearly twenty years ago. After living some years in retirement, from reading the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, I became convinced that no believer in either, could, consistently with his sacred duty to God, make what is called the profession of arms, or, in other words, the killing of his brethren for hire, a trade to live by.

When the will of JEHOVAH can be ascertained, or what is believed to be his revealed will, the humble and sincere worshipper, whatever may be his theological creed, has no choice,—obedience, implicit obedience, becomes his bounden duty. For his encouragement, and what greater encouragement could Jew or Christian wish for, he knows that JEHOVAH, by his prophet, hath said, “Them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.”* Impressed with the superlative importance of obtaining the approbation of JEHOVAH, I did not long hesitate, but in obedience to what I considered a

* 1 Samuel ii. 30.

duty, I relinquished a situation of honour and emolument—a situation which I had attained by long and faithful services—a situation which was, in many respects, highly agreeable and convenient to me.

My reasons for so unusual a step have been some time before the world; and as your speech, already alluded to, contained sentiments very similar to those expressed in my ‘Apology’ for withdrawing from the profession of arms, I determined on addressing these Letters to you, and I think myself singularly happy in addressing them to one who must be regarded with sentiments of esteem and respect, by all Christians and Jews who are lovers of truth.

I think it necessary further to state that, like you, I am a worshipper of **JEHOVAH**, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,—the God and the beneficent parent not only of Jews and Christians, but of all the nations and peoples on earth; the God whom Jesus Christ (as well as Moses) commanded his followers to worship. This worship I believe to be the foundation-stone of all religion, and every deviation from it I regard as a species of idolatry, and an indignity offered to **JEHOVAH**, as much as you, or any one can do; and I have for several years carefully abstained from attending any place of religious worship where any God, save **JEHOVAH**, was worshipped.

In endeavouring, therefore, to persuade my Jewish brethren to become Christians, I shall not,

like the Trinitarian, have occasion to affront their understandings by an attempt to shew that "the prophet like unto Moses," is the GREAT JEHOVAH, but only that Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ, or the anointed of God; he of whom Isaiah said, "Behold my *servant* whom I uphold." * Strange as it may appear to you, that men of enlightened understandings should for a moment entertain propositions so evidently at variance with reason and common sense as that JEHOVAH, his *prophet*, and his *servant*, are one and the same; yet this the Trinitarian believes: He believes, according to Lord Bacon, who was himself a Trinitarian, "Three to be one, and one three; a Father not to be older than his son, a son to be equal with his Father; and one proceeding from both, to be equal with both. He believes three persons in one nature, and two natures in one person. He believes a virgin to be the mother of a son, and that very son of hers to be her Maker; he believes him to have been shut up in a narrow room, whom heaven and earth cannot contain. He believes him to have been a weak child, carried in arms, who is almighty; and him once to have been dead, who *only* hath life and immortality in himself." †

Were it necessary for me, like the Trinitarian, to reconcile inconsistencies, or rather, impossibilities,

* Isaiah lxii. 1. † See Letters by the Author, to the Rev. James Richardson, pages 79, 80.

such as I have stated, I should never have taken up my pen to address you. Such absurdities, for they deserve no other name, may belong to polytheism, but certainly not to the religion taught by Jesus. That Christians depart from the pure spiritual worship of JEHOVAH, will, I think, appear to you more than probable, from the following extract. Dr. Burgh, who wrote in defence of the doctrine of the Trinity, says,

“The goodness of God and that gracious indulgence, with which he has consulted the infirmities of our state, is in this respect, also, very strongly displayed, that he took manhood on him, in order to give a *sensible object of worship* to mankind, incapable of forming any adequate idea of the abstract God, whose qualities are of a nature incomprehensible by our minds. The world, merged in idolatry, at the time of his incarnation, was mercifully indulged with an *object of sense*; to whom, even by the exertion of the same faculties, by which they had adopted and adored idols, they could *prefer worship* without the imputation of idolatry.” *

As the work of Dr. Burgh was highly approved by the orthodox, and as the University of Oxford conferred on him a Doctor's degree as a testimony of their approbation of his work, I think we may reasonably conclude, that men are far fallen from the pure spiritual worship of JEHO-

* See Letters by the Author, to the Rev. James Richardson, pages 57, 58.

VAH, and that in one of the first seminaries of learning in the world, a *sensible object* of worship is inculcated, in violation of the spirit of the command given to you by Moses (Deut. iv. 12—18.)

The orthodox system, indeed, not only inculcates the worship of a *sensible object*, but it favours polytheism, by teaching men to worship three persons, each of whom it affirms to be God omnipotent. God the Father is worshipped as the Creator, God the Son as the Redeemer, and God the Holy Ghost as the Sanctifier of the world. Here the Christian is early instructed to worship *three Gods*. But if we call them persons, the first principle of religion (Deut. v. 7) is still invaded. One of these is sent, another is the sender; one is given, another is the giver; one is the intercessor, and another hears the intercession; one takes flesh, another never becomes incarnate. Three persons thus discriminated, are as truly three objects to the mind, as if they were plainly acknowledged to be three distinct and separate divinities.

If the Protestant churches of Europe have thus departed from the pure spiritual worship of JEHOVAH, we shall find that the Greek and Romish churches have equally erred in the first principle of religion. And it may perhaps safely be affirmed that Jews are the only nation who have adhered to the pure spiritual worship of JEHOVAH, and to them is allotted the high and honourable employment of bringing all nations from idolatry to the worship of JEHOVAH. "Living waters shall go

out from Jerusalem, half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea : in summer and in winter shall it be. And the LORD shall be king over all the earth : in that day shall there be ONE LORD, and his name ONE."

By *living waters*, I apprehend, is meant the religion to be propagated by the Messiah, or that knowledge of the Lord which is to "cover the earth." This is to be propagated by Jews ; the *living waters* are to go out of *Jerusalem*. By the former sea is (probably) meant the Jews living in a state of ignorance of the true Messiah ; and by the hinder sea, the Gentiles or all the other nations of the earth, Christian or Pagan, that shall not have acknowledged "JEHOVAH to be king over all the earth, and his name one." This applies to the *evening time*, when *it shall be light*. By the expression "*in summer and in winter it shall be*," is probably meant that, at the period alluded to, the flow of religious knowledge shall be constant and uninterrupted, till the absolute supremacy and unity of JEHOVAH shall be universally established.

When the prophet says, "In that day that the light shall not be clear *nor* dark," he appears to draw a lively picture of the present religious state of the world : we have much individual piety and knowledge, but it is partial, the *light is not clear* ; we have much vice and ignorance, but the light is not extinguished ; along with vice and ignorance we have piety ; it is not *dark*. The melancholy fruits of superstition, or of a religion partly true

and partly false, are but too justly stated by yourself. You say that in the metropolis of the most religious country in Europe, "where the number of births were about 30,000 in the year, and the amount of individuals sentenced for transportation, exceeded 5,400 during the same period; the number of families were about 200,000, and the number of females whose mode of life disgraced the streets, was between 60,000 and 70,000." These facts (though, perhaps, overstated) are as appalling as they are humiliating; and when we consider them, and the antichristian and belligerent character of Christians, since, as well as before the establishment of Protestantism, we must subscribe to the justice of your remark that, "If the doctrines of Christianity are true, there does not, in reality, exist one Christian nation."

With you, and with many pious and well-informed Christians, I do believe that one such nation does not exist; but still I maintain, and shall endeavour to prove to you, that the doctrines of Christianity are nevertheless true. Not the doctrines contained in creeds and articles of faith, but those which shine forth in your and our Scriptures. To a summary of these I feel confident you will give your assent. "Hear, O Israel; the LORD our God is one LORD; and thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength; this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt

love thy neighbour as thyself." To comply with these, I believe to be more acceptable to God than burnt-offerings and sacrifices ; or our assent to all creeds and confessions of faith.

On this broad ground, as fellow-worshippers of JEHOVAH, you and I may embrace each other as brethren ; and I entreat you, by that endearing name, to examine with calmness and impartiality, your own Scriptures in conjunction with those of the New Testament, in order to ascertain whether Jesus was indeed the Messiah. Should you, upon examination, find him to have been such, you and your nation will have cause to rejoice as if you had found a hidden treasure. You will have discovered the cause of your dispersion and long-continued calamities ; and, having discovered the cause, you may remove the effect, and conclude that the time "for your redemption draweth nigh."

That Jews should entertain strong prejudices against Christians is not to be wondered at, considering the cruel and oppressive treatment they have received, and in some nations continue to receive, from them. Nor is it surprising that they should extend their dislike to the Christian Scriptures, very naturally concluding that these Scriptures have had no small influence on those who profess to believe them,—that they are the bad tree which has produced the evil fruit. If, however, it can be shewn that it is by neglecting, and not by obeying those Scriptures ; by the abuse,

and not by the practice; of the excellent precepts they contain; that Christians have been led to treat you with cruelty and injustice, your prejudices against their religion ought to be abated.

The safest way for you to obtain correct opinions concerning this religion and its author, is by a diligent perusal of your own and the Christian Scriptures in connexion with each other. Such a study, and an examination of the opinions of controversial writers, such as Bishop Horsley and Dr. Priestley, will probably lead you to the conclusion, that modern Christians are in great error concerning the doctrines really taught by Jesus. The difference between these doctrines and those taught by Moses and your prophets, you will find not to be so great as you imagine. You will find that Jesus spoke the truth when he said, he "came not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil them." The non-fulfilment, therefore, of the prophecies relating to the Messiah, is to be attributed to the professors of his religion, and not to the religion itself.

This consideration, among many others which might be urged, ought to render both Jews and Christians humble towards God, and kind towards each other. These sentiments, it is to be hoped, are beginning to be entertained by both parties, and, more than at any former period, they both look forward with the eye of faith, to "the evening time, when it shall be light;" when "living waters shall go out of Jerusalem;" and when

"there shall be one Lord, and his name one." A friendly meeting of JEWS and CHRISTIANS I regard as a most auspicious event.

Permit me to draw your attention to this latter expression of the prophet, "*there shall be one JEHOVAH, and his name one.*" "Had he merely meant, that in the last days, idolatry, or the worship of many gods, should be abolished, he would hardly thus have expressed himself; and it is surely not unreasonable to conclude, from the remarkable words in which this prophecy is expressed, that a period was to arrive, when not only divers false gods were to be worshipped, under their respective names, but when the true God was to be worshipped under divers names, and that both these false worships were to cease, at or before the predicted period. During more than 1200 years, the worship of Jehovah, (under three names, or as three persons,) each of whom is said to be JEHOVAH, has been actually established in every Christian country in Europe. Till, therefore, Christians shall be brought to acknowledge that there is only one JEHOVAH, (or, one person that is JEHOVAH,) and worship him as one, or under one name, and not under three, it appears to me that this prophecy applies to them, as well as to those who worship more gods than one; and that they have *both* to be reclaimed by those *living waters* that have yet to flow from Jerusalem. If the inspired prophet had had the creeds of the orthodox of the present day laid before him, he

could scarcely have condemned the triune apostacy in plainer terms." * The Christian Scriptures are equally explicit, and for a further commentary on this part of the prophecy, permit me to refer you to the pamphlet from which the foregoing extract is made.

The pious Jew still looks forward to the redemption and restoration of his nation, through the mediation, or under the reign of the Messiah. During eighteen centuries, you and your forefathers have in vain indulged in hopes that the sure promises of God would be fulfilled to the descendants of Abraham, but the realization of these hopes still eludes your expectation, and you painfully experience that "hope deferred maketh the heart sick."

The situation of the pious Christian, also, is not very dissimilar from that of his Jewish brother. He in vain attempts the conversion of the heathen nations. With a zeal deserving applause, the missionary endeavours to convert "the wilderness into a fruitful field." But the time, alas, seems as distant to the Christian as to the Jew, when men shall cease to learn war, and shall dwell without fear, "every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree."

* See a Letter addressed by the Author, to the Rev. Geo. Stanley Faber, on his Sermon preached in St. Paul's Church, before the London Society for promoting Christianity among the Jews, on April 18, 1822. This Letter is contained in a Supplement to a series of Letters to the Rev. James Richardson, on his "Vindication of the Athanasian Creed."

Before I proceed to explain to you the grounds on which I believe that Jesus was the Messiah ; or, in other words, why I am a Christian, I will briefly state to you what Christianity is not, and, also, what it really is.

Christianity, then, is not a religion which teaches that God is three, and his name three, or that he is a *triune God* ; but that “ *he is one, and his name one.*”—That “ *The Lord our God is one Lord.*”—That “ *To us there is but one God, the Father.*”

It is not a religion which teaches that Jesus Christ is of the same *substance* or *essence* as the great JEHOVAH ; but that he is one in council and benevolent design with him, in the same manner as his Apostles were with himself. This Jesus explains when he says “ *The glory which thou gavest me I have given them ; that they may be ONE, EVEN AS WE ARE ONE.*”

It is not a religion depending on mysteries,—mysteries “ so awfully stupendous, that reason stands aghast, and faith herself is half confounded ;” * but so plain that “ the way-faring men, though fools, shall not err therein.”

It is not a religion which teaches that God forgives men on account of the merits of Christ ; or because they are the descendants of Abraham ; or because a righteous man has suffered the penalty due to sinners ; or that his righteousness

* Bishop Hurd.

will be imputed to others ; but it teaches plainly that "The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." (Ezek. xviii. 20.) "And that it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as he hath commanded us." (Deut. vi. 25.) Christianity plainly teaches, though men may wish to evade the awful truth, "That every man shall receive according to the deeds done in the flesh ;" that "as a man sows he shall also reap ;" and "that he *only* that *doeth* righteousness is righteous."

It is not a religion which tells its votaries that, "They may lawfully wear weapons and serve in war at the commandment of magistrates," as fallible as themselves ; but a religion which enforces the divine command, "Thou shalt do no murder." It teaches men "not to resist evil," and to leave the work of vengeance to Jehovah ; it so powerfully enforces justice, judgment, and mercy, that, when it shall have taken root in the minds of men, it will compel them to abandon revenge, and beat their swords into ploughshares.

It is not a religion which, like the Catholic, the Greek, or the Protestant religion, requires of men a servile obedience to their priests, or a *prostration of the understanding* ;* but it is a religion which courts examination, and calls upon men to

* See Dr. Howley's Primary Visitation Charge, when appointed Bishop of London.

exercise their understandings, and to examine the Scriptures, (that is your Scriptures,) and ascertain from them whether Christianity is true or false.

It is not, therefore, like the religions of ancient Greece and Rome, a religion devised by crafty politicians, or like the present church of Rome, a church and state religion, to make men the servile flatterers and slaves of those in power; but it is a religion that will subdue principalities, thrones, and powers, to its benignant sway. It is a religion calculated to make rulers honest, and subjects submissive, "rendering unto Cæsar, the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God, the things that are God's."

It is not your own religion rendered impure and invalid by an admixture of Grecian or Roman superstitions; but it is your own religion confirmed and ratified in all its most excellent and important doctrines, with the additional commandment, that men shall love their enemies: and, especially, it is a religion which contains a clear and explicit revelation of the glorious doctrine of a resurrection from the dead.

Lastly, it is not, like the religion of Moses, a religion adapted for one particular period or nation, or for the infancy of the world; but it is a religion calculated alike for the rich and the poor; for the learned and the ignorant; for ages of *gross darkness*; and for "*That day that the light shall not be clear nor dark*;" for "*the evening time*

when it shall be light ;” and for the time when Christians, who have apostatized from the truth, together with Jews and Pagan nations, shall acknowledge the celestial truth, that “*there is one JEHOVAH, and his name one.*”

Such is the religion to which, and to its divine Author, I earnestly and affectionately entreat your candid and diligent inquiry. It is, you must allow, a religion every way deserving your most serious attention and examination, if what I have said concerning it be true, as I hope to be able to shew to you that it is. That such a religion should have become debased and polluted, in passing through the hands of Greeks and Romans, is a subject greatly to be regretted, but certainly not to be wondered at. Mankind, in all ages, have been averse to the pure spiritual worship of an invisible Spirit ; in all ages, as with Christians at present, an *object of sense* has been preferred to the invisible Jehovah. The history of your nation supplies many instances of this kind which I need not point out to you ; and it was not till after the Babylonian captivity, that your countrymen were cured of this propensity. Concerning the *early corruptions* of Christianity, I would recommend you to read the works of Dr. Priestley, not neglecting, at the same time, those of his opponent, Bishop Horsley. You are more likely than Christians not to be warped by prejudice in forming your estimate of the merits, or demerits, of these celebrated controversialists.

Every pious and thinking man, whether Jew or Christian, must feel convinced, that the omnipotent Creator never afflicts but for wise and benevolent purposes. As his favours to your nation have been great, and as you are not more wicked and immoral than other nations, it seems reasonable to suppose, that the signal chastisements inflicted upon you, are not only for your benefit, but that you are now suffering on account of some *special* act of disobedience, not imputable to other nations; for you are afflicted in a way different from every other people. You are become, as was foretold, "a by-word among nations." To what more probable cause, permit me to ask, can you attribute your present dispersion and calamities, than to your rejection of that prophet to whom Moses commanded you to *hearken*? Is it not, then, peculiarly your interest, as well as your duty, to inform yourselves minutely of every particular concerning Christianity and its Author? It is pre-eminently so; for to your nation is reserved not only the happiness of being restored to the land of your forefathers, but the high and distinguished honour of rendering the religion of the Messiah, a blessing to all the nations of the earth. The remarks of the learned and rev. G. S. Faber, being strictly applicable, permit me to give you them in his own words.

After quoting Isaiah ii. 1—3, he says,

“ From this passage we learn, that the figurative living waters, which flow from the temple immediately after the restoration of the Jews, are, in truth, the law and the word of the Lord ; which similarly and at the very same period, go forth from Jerusalem and mount Zion, and which similarly, and at the very same period, bring about the healing, or the life, or the conversion of all nations. Nor can we allow, agreeably to the *once* prevalent, mischievous humour of what was called *spiritualizing the prophecies*, that the present Gentile Christian Church is spoken of in the predictions which have been cited. Isaiah is careful to tell us, that *the word, which he saw, concerned Judah and Jerusalem* : * and the whole context of the oracles of Zechariah, Joel, and Ezekiel, proves, I think indisputably, that they are incapable of any other application than to God’s ancient people, now happily converted and restored.

“ The same remark may be made upon another well-known prophecy of Isaiah ; which, by the process of spiritualization, has often been perverted from the literal house of Israel to the Christian Church, already gathered from among the Gentiles.

“ Arise, shine ; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people ; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee : and the Gentiles shall come to thy light ; and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see : all they gather themselves together, they come to thee : thy sons shall come from far, and thy daugh-

* Isaiah ii. 1.

ters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see, and flow together ; and thy heart shall fear and be enlarged : because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee." *

Mr. Faber infers from this, and various other prophecies, that " the converted Jews are destined, in the unsearchable wisdom of God, to be the finally successful missionaries to the Gentile world : " and he assigns this as the cause of the failure of missionary exertions among Pagan nations. As a minister of a church, which in its doctrines he considers orthodox and free from Pagan or Popish errors, he, as might be expected, takes it for granted that this church does not stand in need of conversion. But the prophet Zechariah gives us to understand that the *living waters*, which are to issue from Jerusalem, are to be for the benefit of all those who do not acknowledge JEHOVAH to be king over all the earth, that he is ONE and his name is ONE. This seems strictly to apply to all nations usually denominated Christians. All these practically deny that JEHOVAH is king over all the earth ; they set him and his sacred laws at defiance, and so far from admitting that HE is *one* and his name *one*, they have every where proclaimed that HE is three ; that he consists of three persons, to each of whom is assigned separate and distinct offices : they also maintain that his name

* Isaiah lx. 1—5.

is *three*, and have daringly invented a new name for the great JEHOVAH, that your fathers probably never even heard of.

To maintain that your nation, despised and rejected as the outcast of all nations, should be the divinely appointed religious instructors of Christian nations,—of nations who possess so many and great advantages over you in learning and power, may expose me to the derision and contempt of the learned and unlearned, of the religious and profane. This conduct of JEHOVAH would, however, be in accordance with his plans in revealing his will by Jesus and his humble followers.

Idolatry, or the worship of a *sensible object*, was the great and besetting sin of your forefathers; and against this sin the denunciations of JEHOVAH were peculiarly directed. Every crime of which your nation was guilty, almost every calamity which it suffered, prior to the Babylonian captivity, may be attributed to its deserting the worship of JEHOVAH, and preferring an *object of sense*. The sufferings of many Christian nations have been very little inferior to yours; is it not, therefore, reasonable to suppose that their *idolatry*, in worshipping a *sensible object*, may be one great cause of God's displeasure against them? or that this idolatry, by promoting infidelity, and nurturing vice, is the great predisposing cause of wars, and their various concomitant evils, which have so long disgraced the Christian name, and deluged the world with human blood.

Considering your nation as not only the highly-honoured instrument of preaching the Gospel of Peace to Pagan nations, but also as the appointed regenerators of Christians, who have apostatized from their first faith, permit me earnestly, and with the most sincere affection, to urge you to engage with diligence and good-will, in the glorious work which is allotted to you. Hasten to proclaim to erring Christians, that JEHOVAH, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob; the God and Father of Jesus Christ, is simply and absolutely ONE, the blessed and ONLY Potentate*; that there is no God, in the proper sense of the word, with him †, nor like him, ‡ nor equal to him; § and consequently, that he ALONE is the true object of supreme and religious adoration. ||

I cannot hope that the perusal of the following letters will of themselves produce in you a conviction that Jesus is the Messiah; if they lead you, or any of your nation, to a diligent perusal of the Christian Scriptures, my utmost expectations will be answered.

Accept, Sir, my prayers that JEHOVAH may bless you and your nation; that all the prophecies concerning your future glory may be accomplished; and that through *you, all the nations of the earth may be blessed*; and, whether Pagans, who

* Deut. vi. 4.; Mark xii. 29.; 1 Cor. viii. 4—6.; 1 Tim. vi. 15.
 † Deut. xxxii. 39.; ‡ Isaiah xlv. 5—9.; § Isaiah xl. 25.;
 Isaiah xlv. 5.; || Matt. vi. 9.

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know not JEHOVAH, Jews, who acknowledge not Jesus as the Messiah, or Christians, who have apostatized from their faith, and worship an *object of sense*, may they all, *by living waters which shall go out from Jerusalem*, i. e. by the preaching of converted Jews, be brought to acknowledge that "JEHOVAH is king over all the earth;" "that he is one and his name one;" that to all, Jews, Christians, Mohammedans, or Pagans, "there is but one God, the Father."

I remain, &c.

LETTER II.

ON THE INTERNAL EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

“Hear, O Israel; the LORD our God is one LORD, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely, this: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”
Deut. vi 4, 5; Mark xii. 29—31.

SIR,

THE evidences of the truth of revealed religion have engaged the pens of so many men of learning and piety, and the subject has been discussed in so many works,—in extended and elaborate, as well as in compressed ones,—that it appears to be exhausted. All, therefore, that I shall here attempt, will be to select a few of the most popular evidences, and place them before you in an epistolary form.

The internal evidences of the Christian religion are necessarily, in many important particulars, of the same kind as those of the Jewish religion; owing to the similarity and close connexion there is between the two religions. If the internal evidences in favour of your religion shew it to be highly probable that it is of divine origin, from its being suited to the state of the world when it was promulgated; the Christian religion has a similar

claim to regard, from being suited to a state of more advanced learning and civilization : and particularly from the excellency of its moral precepts, which are admirably fitted to realize those universal blessings your prophecies lead us to expect, in the latter ages of the world.

These precepts, instead of prescribing the austerities of the cloister, the solitude of the hermit, or the wanderings and privations of the pilgrim, are calculated to fit us for social intercourse, to correct the errors, and reform the vices, which, from our propensity to do evil, and our erroneous systems of education, have for ages past prevailed in the world. These precepts teach us to worship Jehovah "in spirit and in truth;" to love him with all the energies of our souls; to make his revealed will our primary law; to "render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things which are God's." The precepts of Jesus take a more extensive range than the law delivered by Moses, not only commanding us to love our neighbour as ourselves, but designating every human being as our neighbour. They command us to love even our enemies; to abstain from revenge; to return blessing for cursing; good for evil; they teach us to be pure in heart; to submit patiently to persecution; to be peacemakers; not to resist evil, but to abstain from revenge; and to be merciful to others to the greatest possible extent; even as God is merciful unto us.

The Christian Scriptures lay down laws suited

to the most advanced state of civilization ; for governors and the governed ; for ministers and for their flocks ; for husbands and wives ; for parents and children. If these laws were obeyed universally, the certain consequences would be, that the prophecies concerning the reign of the Messiah would receive their accomplishment. There would be no unjust oppression ; slavery and tyranny would cease ; rulers would become just, and subjects submissive and contented ; parents faithful and affectionate ; children dutiful ; neighbours blessings to each other ; ministers of religion the friends and fathers of their flocks ; men would “ ceased to learn war ” and “ beat their swords into ploughshares.”

Regarding these results as not only highly probable, but certain, I am led to believe that the religion taught by Jesus is of divine origin ; and, consequently, that its Author is the great prophet like unto Moses, unto whom your fathers were commanded to hearken ; that he is the Messiah, or, the Anointed of God.

A great part of what is here advanced in favour of Christianity, you will perhaps tell me, applies strictly to your religion. To the truth of this I readily and joyfully assent ; for this resemblance between the two religions shews that Jesus in reality came not to destroy your *moral* law, but to enforce and fulfil it ; and, therefore, affords more rational hopes of your conversion ; or at least of your being prevailed upon to examine the evi-

dence in favour of his Messiahship. But Christianity, permit me to say, has higher claims to your acceptance than the religion of Moses.

As Moses told your fathers that a prophet like unto himself was to be raised up in the latter days, and that you were to *hearken* unto him, it may be inferred that this prophet was to reveal something, or deliver some command, which Jehovah did not think proper to reveal at that time by Moses. Effectually, we find the glorious doctrine of a resurrection from the dead established on solid grounds. Thus Christianity gives us more cheering and exalted ideas than Judaism, of the paternal character of JEHOVAH; not limiting his goodness to time or nation, but extending it to all nations and to the end of time. "Since its introduction," says Dr. Channing; "human nature has made great progress, and society experienced great changes; and in this advanced condition of the world, Christianity, instead of losing its application and importance, is found to be more and more congenial and adapted to man's nature and wants. Men have outgrown the other institutions of that period when Christianity appeared; its philosophy, its modes of warfare, its policy, its public and private economy; but Christianity has never shrunk as intellect has opened, but has always kept in advance of men's faculties, and unfolded nobler views, in proportion as they have ascended. The highest powers and affections, which our nature has developed, find more than

adequate objects in this religion. Christianity is, indeed, fitted to the more improved stages of society, to the more delicate sensibilities of refined minds, and especially to that dissatisfaction with the present state, which always grows with the growth of our moral powers and affections. As men advance in civilization, they become susceptible of mental sufferings, to which ruder ages are strangers; and these Christianity is fitted to assuage. Imagination and intellect become more restless; and Christianity brings them tranquillity, by the eternal and magnificent truths, the solemn and unbounded prospects, which it unfolds. This fitness of our religion to more advanced stages of society than that in which it was introduced, seems to me very striking. The religion bears the marks of having come from a being who perfectly understood the human mind, and had power to provide for its progress. This feature of Christianity is of the nature of prophecy. It was an anticipation of future ages; and when we consider among whom our religion sprung, where, but in God, can we find an explanation of this peculiarity?" *

The foregoing remarks apply strictly to the religion promulgated by Jesus and his Apostles, but by no means to those systems of religion taught by the Greek, the Roman, and the Protestant

* See a DISCOURSE on the Evidences of Revealed Religion, delivered before the University of Cambridge in America; reprinted in Bristol,—pages 36—38.

churches. By the unerring rule given us by Jesus, that "a tree is known by its fruits," none of these deserve the imposing epithets of *infallible* or *orthodox*. These epithets have their origin in spiritual pride and superstition. They belong to a "kingdom of this world." Their inseparable attendants are war, murder, rapine, and a host of crimes and vices. But the religion taught by Jesus is called, and justly called, "the Gospel of Peace," and its divine Author "the Prince of Peace." It originated in that wisdom that is from above, and, like it, "is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits." When this blessed Gospel shall become the rule of men's lives, then the conversion of Pagan nations may be confidently anticipated; then "judgement shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field;" then "my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places." As all these and many other blessings predicted by your prophets, are to be accomplished by the religion, or under the reign of the Messiah, he is consequently entitled to a much higher degree of respect than Moses or any other of your prophets.

You will, perhaps, tell me, that these blessings are in reserve for you; but that they are withheld, and the coming of the Messiah delayed, on account of the wickedness of yourselves and your forefathers. As to your own sins, as I have already

observed, they are not greater than those of Christian nations. In one particular they are much less, for you have refrained from war, the parent of all crimes. As to the sins of your forefathers, you may be assured that JEHOVAH, *whose anger endureth but for a moment*, is not so unjust as to punish *you* for the sins *they* committed before the destruction of Jerusalem. Is it not probable that the promised blessings are withheld, I would again affectionately ask you, because your fathers rejected the prophet like unto Moses, and because ye also refuse "to hearken unto that prophet?"

Should you tell me that Christians as well as Jews are labouring under the divine displeasure, and that the non-fulfilment of the prophecies relating to the Messiah, is a proof of this; and also a proof that Jesus was not the Messiah;—I admit that the Christian, as well as the Jew, may say of his religion that "he looked that it should bring forth grapes; and it brought forth wild grapes." To the Jew, because he hath rejected the Messiah. To the Christian because, acknowledging him, he has cast off his allegiance to him. These things are perfectly reconcileable with the prophecies of of both the Jewish and Christian prophets, as I shall hereafter have occasion more particularly to shew. A period of *gross darkness*, as predicted, has happened to *both*; and the *falling away* of Christians from their faith, when brought to the test of prophecy, will be found to strengthen the *internal evidences* of Christianity.

As the whole world, and particularly Jews and Christians, are deeply interested in deciding whether Jesus be the Messiah, may they both, laying aside their prejudices and animosities, endeavour to discern the revealed will of ЈЕHOVAH ; and, having discovered it, may they emulate each other in obedience to the divine command delivered by Moses, and also by Jesus ; “ Hear, O Israel ; the LORD our God is one LORD ; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart ; with all thy soul ; and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.” This is the first commandment. It is the root of the religion taught by Moses. It is also the root of the tree planted by Jesus ; who came not to destroy the *moral* law. The stem of this tree is, “ Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” Its branches are faith, hope, charity, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance ; and its fruit, “ glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will, and *universal righteousness* among men.

That this glorious religion, established by Jesus, and his Apostles, and their successors, was of divine origin, may be concluded from its wide and rapid spread. For, in about three hundred years, a large portion of the inhabitants of Asia Minor, of Africa, and of Europe adopted it ; and this not only unaided by political power, but in direct opposition to it ; and chiefly by the *internal evidences* of its truth.

Under the reign of Constantine, Christians obtained political power ; and Christianity became,

like the religion of ancient, and also of modern Rome, a "church and state" religion. It became the handmaid of princes and kings.* Thus degraded, thus encumbered with wealth and political influence, its divine powers of expansion became paralysed; its pure and simple doctrines debased by an admixture of Pagan superstitions; and its professors, from being the friends of liberty, became hirelings in Pagan armies. Instead of commanding respect, and being distinguished for the virtues of meekness, forbearance, and brotherly love, their priesthood became ambitious, rapacious, and servile to those in power. These consequences, which have generally attended a union of ecclesiastical and political power, shew the wisdom of the remark made by Jesus, that a rich man could "hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven;" i. e. become a Christian. These consequences point to the causes that have impeded the spread of Christianity among Pagan nations; but they do not at all affect the *internal evidences* of its truth.

Permit me here to recommend to your perusal the chapter in Dr. Paley, on the Morality of the Gospel.

I remain, &c.

* Revelations xvii. 2.

LETTER III.

THE CHARACTER OF JESUS, AN EVIDENCE OF THE TRUTH OF HIS MISSION.

"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted; yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before his shearers he is dumb, so he opened not his mouth."—*Isaiah liii. 7.*

SIR,

THE very peculiar character and precepts of the religion taught by Jesus, and its superiority, in some important points, as mentioned in my last letter, over your religion as set forth in the Law and the Prophets, entitles it, to a careful and impartial examination at your hands. Should these letters induce you, or any of my Jewish brethren, to engage in this examination, I shall consider my time employed in writing them, as profitably and happily spent. As an additional motive to you to engage in this inquiry, I propose in this letter to set before you, the very peculiar character of Jesus, the Author and Founder of this religion.

A little observation will shew that, in the moral government of the world, God, in order that his power and wisdom may be the more

conspicuous, generally makes use of persons the least likely, according to human judgment, to accomplish his mighty purposes. In the words of one learned in your law, Paul of Tarsus, "God chooseth the foolish (*or simple and unlearned*) *men* to confound the wise; and the weak *men* of the world to confound the mighty." * In the words of David, "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings God has ordained strength." † This, you will acknowledge, was manifested in the choice of Moses. To accomplish so mighty a work as your deliverance from bondage, though learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, he seemed, as an humble individual employed in feeding sheep, to be by no means qualified. But the miracles which he performed shewed that God was with him, and that he was the appointed agent of Omnipotence to accomplish your liberation from Egyptian bondage. The same remarks apply with still greater force to Jesus; for it is scarcely possible for imagination to draw a character less fitted to revolutionize the world. The knowledge of what he has accomplished, ought to induce you, independent of all adventitious circumstances, carefully to examine a character, which in the history of the world has no parallel. This character I find so ably delineated by a trans-atlantic writer, that I shall offer no apology for giving you it in his own words.

* 1 Cor. i. 27.

† Psalm viii. 2.

"We are immediately struck," says Dr. Channing, "with this peculiarity in the character of the Author of Christianity, that whilst all other men are formed in a measure by the spirit of the age, we can discover in Jesus no impression of the period in which he lived. We know with considerable accuracy the state of society, the modes of thinking, the hopes and expectations of the country in which Jesus was born and grew up, and he is as free from them, and as exalted above them, as if he had lived in another world, or with every sense shut on the objects around him. His character has in it nothing local or temporary. It can be explained by nothing around him. His history shews him to us a solitary being, living for purposes which none but himself comprehended, and enjoying not so much as the sympathy of a single mind. His apostles, his chosen companions, brought to him the spirit of the age; and nothing shews its strength more strikingly, than the slowness with which it yielded, in these honest men, to the instructions of Jesus.

"Jesus came to a nation expecting a Messiah; and he claimed this character. But instead of conforming to the opinions which prevailed in regard to the Messiah, he resisted them wholly and without reserve. To a people anticipating a triumphant leader, under whom vengeance as well as ambition was to be glutted by the prostration of their oppressors, he came as a spiritual leader, teaching humility and peace. This undisguised hostility to the dearest hopes and prejudices of his nation; this disdain of the usual compliances, by which ambition and imposture conciliate adherents; this deliberate exposure of himself to rejection and hatred, cannot easily be explained by the common principles of human nature, and excludes the possibility of selfish aims in the Author of Christianity.

"One striking peculiarity in Jesus is the *extent*, the vastness of his views. Whilst all around him looked for a

Messiah to liberate God's ancient people ; whilst to every other Jew, Judea was the exclusive object of pride and hope ; Jesus came, declaring himself to be the deliverer and light of *the world* ; and in his whole teaching and life, you see a consciousness, which never forsakes him, of a relation to the whole human race. This idea of blessing mankind, of spreading a universal religion, was the most magnificent which had ever entered man's mind. All previous religions had been given to particular nations. No conqueror, legislator, philosopher, in the extravagance of ambition, had ever dreamed of subjecting all nations to a common faith.

“ This conception of a universal religion, intended alike for Jew and Gentile, for all nations and climes, is wholly inexplicable by the circumstances of Jesus. He was a Jew ; and the first, and deepest, and most constant impression on a Jew's mind, was that of the superiority confirmed on his people and himself by the national religion introduced by Moses. The wall between the Jew and the Gentile seemed to reach to heaven. The abolition of the peculiarity of Moses, the overthrow of the temple on Mount Sinai, the erection of a new religion, in which all men would meet as brethren, and which would be the common and equal property of Jew and Gentile, these were of all ideas the last to spring up in Judea, the last for enthusiasm or imposture to originate.

“ Compare, next, these views of Christ with his station in life. He was of humble birth and education, with nothing in his lot, with no extensive means, no rank, or wealth, or patronage, to infuse vast thoughts and extravagant plans. The shop of a carpenter, the village of Nazareth, were not spots for ripening a scheme, more aspiring and extensive than had ever been formed. It is a principle of human nature, that except in case of insanity, some proportion is observed between the power of an individual, and his plans

and hopes. The purpose to which Jesus devoted himself, was as ill suited to his condition as an attempt to change the seasons, or to make the sun rise in the west. That a young man, in obscure life, belonging to an oppressed nation, should seriously think of subverting the time-hallowed and deep-rooted religions of the world, is a strange fact; but with this purpose we see the mind of Jesus thoroughly imbued; and, sublime as it is, he never falls below it in his language or conduct; but speaks and acts with a consciousness of superiority, with a dignity of authority, becoming this unparalleled destination.

“In this connexion I cannot but add another striking circumstance in Jesus, and that is, the calm confidence with which he always looked forward to the accomplishment of his designs. He fully knew the strength of the passions and powers which were arrayed against him, and was perfectly aware that his life was to be shortened by violence; yet not a word escapes him, implying a doubt of the ultimate triumphs of his religion. One of the beauties of the Gospels, and one of the proofs of their genuineness, is found in our Saviour’s indirect and obscure allusions to his approaching sufferings, and to the glory which was to follow; allusions shewing us the workings of a mind thoroughly conscious of being appointed to accomplish infinite good through great calamity. This entire and patient relinquishment of immediate success, this ever present persuasion that he was to perish before his religion would advance, and this calm, unshaken anticipation of distant and unbounded triumphs, are remarkable traits, throwing a tender and solemn grandeur over our Lord, and wholly inexplicable by human principles, or by the circumstances in which he was placed.

“The views hitherto taken of Christ, relate to his public character and office. If we pass to what may be called his private character, we shall receive the same impression of

inexplicable excellence. The most striking trait in Jesus was, undoubtedly, benevolence; and although this virtue had existed before, yet it had not been manifested in the same form and extent. Christ's benevolence was distinguished first by its expansiveness. At that age, an unconfined philanthropy, proposing and toiling to do good, without distinction of country or rank, was unknown. Love to man as man; love, comprehending the hated Samaritan and the despised publican, was a feature which separated Jesus from the best men of his nation, and of the world. Another characteristic of the benevolence of Jesus, was its gentleness and tenderness, forming a strong contrast with the hardness and ferocity of the spirit and manners which then prevailed, and with that sternness and inflexibility which the purest philosophy of Greece and Rome inculcated as the perfection of virtue. But its most distinguishing trait was its superiority to injury. Revenge was one of the recognised rights of the age in which he lived; and though a few sages, who had seen its inconsistency with man's dignity, had condemned it, yet none had inculcated the duty of regarding one's worst enemies with that kindness which God manifests to sinful men, and of returning curses with blessings and prayers. This form of benevolence, the most disinterested and divine form, was, as you well know, manifested by Jesus Christ in infinite strength, amidst injuries and indignities which cannot be surpassed. Now this singular eminence of goodness, this superiority to the degrading influences of the age, under which all other men suffered, needs to be explained; and one thing it demonstrates, that Jesus Christ was not an unprincipled deceiver, exposing not only his own life, but the lives of confiding friends, in an enterprize next to desperate.

"I cannot enlarge on other traits of the character of Christ. I will only observe, that it had one distinction, which, more than any thing, forms a perfect character. It was made up

of contrasts ; in other words, it was a union of excellencies which are not easily reconciled, which seem at first sight incongruous, but which, when blended and duly proportioned, constitute moral harmony, and attract with equal power, love and veneration. For example, we discover in Jesus Christ an unparalleled dignity of character, a consciousness of greatness, never discovered or approached by any other individual in history ; and yet, this was blended with a condescension, lowliness, and unostentatious simplicity, which had never before been thought consistent with greatness. In like manner he united another superiority to the world, to its pleasures and ordinary interests, with suavity of manners, and freedom of austerity. He joined strong feeling and self-possession ; an indignant sensibility to sin, and compassion to the sinner ; an intense devotion to his work, and calmness under opposition and ill success ; a universal philanthropy, and a susceptibility of private attachments ; the authority which became the Saviour of the world, and the tenderness and gratitude of a son. Such was the Author of our religion. And is his character to be explained by imposture or insane enthusiasm ? Does it not bear the unambiguous marks of a heavenly origin ?

“ Perhaps it may be said, this character never existed. Then the invention of it is to be explained, and the reception which this fiction met with ; and these, perhaps, are as difficult of explanation on natural principles, as its real existence. Christ’s history bears all the marks of reality ; a more frank, simple, unlaboured, unostentatious narrative was never penned. Besides, his character, if invented, must have been an invention of singular difficulty, because no models existed on which to frame it. He stands alone in the records of time. The conception of a being, proposing such new and exalted ends, and governed by higher principles than the progress of society had developed, implies singular intellectual power. That several individuals should

join in equal vivid conceptions of this character, and should not merely describe, in general terms, the fictitious being to whom it is attributed, but should introduce him into real life, should place him in a great variety of circumstances, in connexion with various ranks of men, with friends and foes, and should in all preserve his identity, shew the same great and singular mind always acting in harmony with itself; this is a supposition hardly credible, and, when the circumstances of the writers of the New Testament are considered, seems to be as inexplicable on human principles, as what I before suggested, the composition of Newton's *Principia* by a savage. The character of Christ, though delineated in an age of great moral darkness, has stood the scrutiny of ages; and in proportion as men's moral sentiments have been refined, its beauty has been more seen and felt. To suppose it invented, is to suppose that its authors, outstripping their age, had attained to a singular delicacy and elevation of moral perception and feeling. But these attainments are not very reconcileable with the character of its authors, supposing it to be a fiction; that is, with the character of habitual liars and impious deceivers.

"But we are not only unable to discover power adequate to this invention; there must have been *motives* for it; for men do not make great efforts, without strong motives; and in the whole compass of human incitements, we challenge the infidel to suggest any, which could have prompted to the work now to be explained.

"Once more, it must be recollected, that this invention, if it were one, was received as real, at a period so near to the time ascribed to Christ's appearance, that the means of detecting it were infinite. That men should send out such a forgery, and that it should prevail and triumph, are circumstances not easily reconcileable with the principles of our nature.

"The character of Christ, then, was real. Its reality is the only explanation of the mighty revolution produced by his religion. And how can you account for it, but by that cause to which he always referred it, a mission from the Father?" *

I have selected the foregoing character of Jesus from the pen of Dr. Channing, as the most animated and the most correct I have ever seen; and the most likely to engage the attention of you and your brethren. I have also been led to make this selection from Dr. C., who is a most able and zealous defender of Christianity, and yet as strictly opposed as the most devout Jew can be, to any doctrine hostile to the first and great commandment, "Hear, O Israel!" Though mentioned by the *Quarterly Review* as "*one of those men who are a blessing and an honour to their generation and their country*,"† Dr. C. is no more a believer than you are in what is termed the *Divinity* of Jesus;—perhaps I ought to say, the *Deity* of Jesus; for of his divine mission as the Messiah no one is a more firm believer, or more able advocate.

Your forefathers, expecting that the Messiah would be a great temporal prince sent to deliver them from their subjection to the Romans, could

* See Dr. Channing's Discourse already alluded to, pages 26—35.

† See *Quarterly Review* for July, 1823; article, 'The Progress of Infidelity.'

not reconcile to themselves the humiliating fact, that a man, crucified as a malefactor, could be the Messiah. To them this was "a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness." * Whether Christians are not led away by the same feelings of pride, may be justly suspected. A large portion of them glory in Jesus, not as a *man* "who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification," † but as the Most High God, who left the glories of his celestial kingdom, and took on himself human nature. On this foundation most Christians build their hopes. Did they, like the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, consider Jesus as a man "in all things like unto his brethren," the faith of many would be undermined. A Saviour who was not the Most High God, would by many be regarded as no Saviour; and salvation, unless accompanied by mysteries and circumstances of pomp gratifying to worldly pride, would by many be rejected with indignation. Like Naaman the Syrian, they would turn away and spurn a blessing to be conferred in a way so humiliating to their pride. But let the devout Jew and Christian "in patience possess their souls." Let them, with the humility of Jesus, bear in mind, that concerning the Messiah, the appointed Saviour of the world, JEHOVAH hath said by his prophet, "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted;

* 1 Cor. i. 23.

† Rom. iv. 25.

yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." To apply such a prophecy to JEHOVAH, must necessarily be revolting to a pious Jew; to him it must appear little short of blasphemy.

I remain, &c.

LETTER IV.

THE COMPLETION OF VARIOUS PROPHECIES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, AN EVIDENCE THAT JESUS WAS THE MESSIAH.

“I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.”—*Deut.* xviii. 18, 19.

SIR,

CONCERNING all matters of remote history we must necessarily decide either from direct evidence, written or traditional, or from circumstantial or probable evidence, or from a combination of these two species of evidence. Of the latter kind are those evidences of the truth of Christianity which depend on a combination of history and prophecy. These, though they may not amount to demonstration, or even to moral certainty, yet afford a much higher degree of probability that Christianity is true, and consequently hold out stronger incitements to men to embrace it, than they require for their guidance in their domestic and worldly concerns; for the acquisition of wealth, or rank in society,—the great objects of men's pursuits. Bishop Butler, in his

Introduction to his Analogy of Religion, says, that "a possible presumption of a thing being true, often repeated, will amount even to moral certainty." And "to us probability is the very guide of life."

Although the miracles, and particularly the resurrection of Christ, are to be considered as positive and direct evidence of his being the Messiah, and were so deemed, and acted upon, in the early ages of Christianity: yet, unless supported by prophecy, and by facts and circumstances attending the promulgation of Christianity, this testimony would, at this distance of time, be greatly weakened. But combined with these the direct testimony in favour of the Messiahship of Jesus becomes established and irresistible.

As this kind of evidence necessarily calls for the exercise of faith, we may conclude it to be best suited to the present state and faculties of man. Were the unspeakable glories of a future world made clearly manifest to the senses of each individual Christian, the exhibition would compel obedience; and faith, the kind of practical faith for which your father Abraham was commended, and which is the foundation of all virtue and moral goodness, would become useless. This world would no longer be, what God has intended it, a state of probation.

In my last two letters, I have endeavoured to shew, from the singular excellency of the morals taught by Jesus, and from the no less singu-

lar excellency of his character, that he was the Messiah. The only additional evidence of this truth that I propose to give you in this letter, arises out of the completion of various prophecies concerning him. With these your Scriptures abound. I must, however, confine myself to the selection of a few, but these I trust will be sufficient to shew that, from the very first communications of God to Abraham, to the time of Malachi, the coming of a person as the Messiah, answering to the character of Jesus, was most clearly predicted.

Jesus was to be "*a prophet like unto Moses.*" In many very important particulars a resemblance may be traced between them. "*Moses was very meek above all men.*" Jesus was "*meek and lowly in heart.*" Moses was the Mediator of the Law, or, the Old Covenant: Jesus was the Mediator of the Gospel, or, the New Covenant. Moses was selected by God to deliver his brethren from their bondage in Egypt, and by the miracles and wonders which he was empowered by God to work, he gave testimony of his divine commission: Jesus was selected by God to deliver his brethren, the whole world, from spiritual bondage, from the bondage of sin; and he was "*a man approved of God among you by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you.*" Moses was a great prophet, and predicted with great minuteness, the dreadful calamities attending the siege of Jerusalem, though that city was not

then built: Jesus predicted the same calamities, and pointed out that they should take place *before that generation had passed away*. * And as great calamities befel your nation from departing from the commandments delivered by Moses; so also

* Compare Deut. xxviii. 53—57, with Luke xix. 43.; xxiii. 29.; and Lament. ii. 20.; iv. 10. Josephus says, (*Jewish War*, b. vi. c. 4—6,) “That the city was besieged at the time of the great feast of the passover, (the same time of the year in which they had murdered the Messiah,) when vast multitudes flocked together to Jerusalem, which (by a computation made before that in Nero’s time, by reckoning up the number of lambs which, according to custom, were first offered in the temple before they were eaten in their families, and allowing ten persons to a lamb) might amount to 2,700,000 persons; (*Ibid.* b. vii. c. 17;) so that, ‘as the historian proceeds, “this mighty concourse of people, from abroad, before the siege, was afterwards, by the righteous judgment of God, crowded up in the city as in a prison, for Titus had run a wall round it. (*Ibid.* b. vi. c. 13; Luke xix. 43.) This occasioned a lamentable famine; so that, *Wives forced the meat out of the very mouths of their husbands, children did the like by their parents, and even mothers by their infants.* (*Ibid.* b. vi. c. 11.) In short, the famine swept away whole families, and the houses and alleys were strewn with carcasses. (*Ibid.* b. vi. c. 14.) This forced some to steal out by night for provisions, many of which the Roman soldiers seized on, and after exposing them to all manner of tortures, they were crucified, (*Ibid.* b. vi. c. 12,) as they had treated Jesus. One who had escaped out of the city was surprised in the act of searching for gold, which had been swallowed, and passed through him. The soldiers, discovering this, ripped up 2000 of their bellies in one night, for gold. (*Ibid.* b. vi. c. 10.) And so much did the famine increase that the Jews eat old girdles, and shoes, and the shreds of old hay; and a certain mother killed and boiled her own sucking child, half of which she did eat and covered up the other half; (*Ibid.* b. vii. c. 7, 8;) whereby was accomplished that dreadful judgment which Moses had so many ages before threatened upon them for their disobedience.”

For this compressed account, the author is indebted to Collyer’s *Sacred Interpreter*. See page 312.

have Christians suffered for not hearkening unto the words which Jesus spake in the name of God. But the pious Jews, whatever reverence they may feel for Moses and the prophets, must bear in mind that all these were only the precursors, or harbingers, of the Messiah, and consequently to be regarded as greatly his inferiors. The blessings promised by Moses were chiefly, if not solely, promised to the seed of Abraham; but the blessings promised by Christ, as predicted, were to extend to all the nations of the earth. The blessings of Moses were chiefly limited to time; those of Jesus extended to eternity. (Dan. ii. 44., vii. 14, 27; Micah iv. 7. Compare with Luke i. 33.; John xii. 34.)

Not only the coming of the Messiah, but the circumstances attending his coming, and also his character, are described with so much correctness, as almost to compel us to believe that Jesus is the person alluded to. "Behold," says Isaiah, "my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. As many were astonished at thee; (his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men;) so shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him; for that which hath not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider." Isaiah lii. 13—15.

"Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For he shall grow up before

him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground; he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid, as it were, our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely, he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: (*Matt. viii, 17:*) yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. (*1 Peter ii. 24.*) All we, like sheep, have gone astray: we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; (*Matt. xxvii. 57;*) because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit found in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed; he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; (*Mark xv. 28;*) and he bare the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." *Isaiah liii.*

Whatever difficulties may attend some particular passages of this prophecy, it corresponds in its prominent parts with great exactness, to the character and doctrines of Jesus, as set forth by his historians. And it is I believe impossible to find any other person whom it so exactly suits: but to point out these particulars would unnecessarily extend the length of this letter. Examine and decide for yourselves.

"The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain. And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it." Isaiah xl. 3—5.

"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy. Know, therefore, and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and three score and two weeks; the street shall be built again." Daniel ix. 24, 25.

From whatever period we date this prophecy, it is clear, from Josephus and other historians, that its completion was expected about the period at which Jesus lived. At all events, the learned

men of your own nation acknowledge that the completion of this prophecy was expected many centuries ago.

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion ; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem : behold, thy King cometh unto thee : he is just and having salvation ; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.” Zech. ix. 9. ; Matt. xxi. 5.

“And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price ; and if not, forbear : so they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the LORD said unto me, Cast it unto the potter : a goodly price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the LORD.” Zech. xi 12, 13.

“I gave my face to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair : I hid not my face from shame and spitting.” Isaiah l. 6. ; Matt. xxvi. 67.

These prophecies Christian commentators apply to Jesus in his character of the Messiah, and in many particulars they most certainly apply to him with great exactness. Leaving this important question to your consideration,

I remain, &c.

LETTER V.

THE COMPLETION OF VARIOUS PROPHECIES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT AN EVIDENCE THAT JESUS WAS THE MESSIAH.

“When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously; thou shalt not be afraid of him.”
Deut. xviii. 22.

SIR,

PROPHECY, like every other part of Scripture which JEHOVAH has graciously given to us by inspired messengers, is by Christians, and I doubt not by Jews, considered as “profitable for correction, for instruction in righteousness;” * as “a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path.”† But if we take the Jewish prophecies apart from the Christian history, to what do they lead us? That they have led to disappointed hopes and expectations, the history of your nation during eighteen hundred years will abundantly testify. They have led you to look for a Messiah, and to you no Messiah has arrived; but the very thing has happened which Moses predicted should happen, in

* 2 Tim. iii. 16.; † Psalm cxix. 105.

case you did not hearken to the words of God spoken by the Messiah, saying, "*I will require it of you.*" The curses with which Jehovah threatened your forefathers by Moses, have indeed laid heavy upon your nation, and you have "*become an astonishment, a proverb, and a bye-word among all nations.*" * I say not this to insult you, but with an earnest and affectionate desire to induce you to examine the Christian Scriptures, in order to discover whether they will not guide you out of your present darkness, to *the evening time when it shall be light*:—to "*the living waters which are yet to flow from Jerusalem.*" I proceed now to lay before you a few of the prophecies of the New Testament, in proof of Jesus being the Messiah.

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." Matt. xxiii. 37, 38.

"And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another: because thou knewest not the

* Deut. xxviii. 37.

time of thy visitation." Luke xix. 41—44.; Micah iii. 12.; 1 Kings ix. 7, 8.; Daniel ix. 24.

"And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple; and his disciples came to him, for to shew him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."—"Verily, I say unto you, this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." Matt. xxiv. 1, 2, 34.

"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea, flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it, depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days: for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Luke xxi. 20—24.; Daniel ix. 26, 27.

To the prophecies which I have quoted, permit me to add one of the parables spoken by Jesus to your forefathers, which, being of the nature of prophecy, may not improperly be introduced here.

"There was a certain householder which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a wine-press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country. And when the time of fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned

another. Again, he sent other servants, more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But, last of all, he sent unto them his only son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir, come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the lord of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." Matt. xxi. 33—43.; Isaiah v. 1—7.; Jer. ii. 21.

A reference to Josephus, * and other historians, will shew you that many of the extraordinary predictions of Jesus were fulfilled with singular exactness. The conclusion to be drawn is, that he was a true prophet; that *he did not speak presumptuously*; and, consequently, that he was what he declared himself to be, the Messiah. At least, I think, you will allow that this is *probable*, from the coincidence of so many prophecies, Jewish and Christian, with facts related in history, sacred and profane; so probable, that you may consider it worth the trouble to examine the evidence I have laid before you. If wealth and

* See Note, Letter IV., page 46.

honours depended upon the inquiry, men in search of these would certainly make this inquiry, and act upon it. But the deciding this point, namely, whether Jesus is the Messiah, is of more consequence to you nationally, than wealth or honours. It will shew you the cause of your unparalleled sufferings, and, having discovered the cause, you may remove the effect, by hearkening, as Moses commanded you, to the words of God spoken by the Messiah. You will then regain the high and honourable station your ancestors held in the world, as the depositaries of true religion, the moral instructors of the world, and blessings to all the nations of the earth.

Till you shall not only attempt, but till you accomplish these your allotted duties, it seems probable from prophecy, that your sufferings are to be continued. "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." That is, till the Gentiles shall be brought to the knowledge of the true God. Since this, as before shewn, * is to be accomplished by your nation, it seems to be the duty of your learned men, to take a leading part in the theological controversies which distinguish the present period. If you think that the celestial truths "*JEHOVAH is king over all the earth,*" that "*HE is one and his name one,*" are annulled or obscured by Christian traditions, or by op-

* See Letter I., page 19.

positions of science, falsely so called, or by the vices of nations called Christians; it becomes your duty, as much as it was the duty of your ancient prophets, when your countrymen fell into idolatry, to *cry aloud and spare not*. To proclaim to your Christian brethren that they are in error, even in the object of their adoration; worshipping the *servant* instead of the LORD; the Messiah, instead of Jehovah who anointed and sent him. To act thus seems to be your bounden duty, even if you do not believe Jesus to be the Messiah; for you observe, "*That the law was designed to furnish man universally with a motive of action*," and that, "*The law was not made for Israel alone, but for the whole human race*." That this was to be the case in the *last days*, or under the reign of the Messiah, seems highly probable from *Isaiah lii. 28—32*, compared with *Acts ii. 9—17*. As the divinely-appointed depositaries of *this law* you are bound to proclaim it, if you hope for the blessing of Jehovah, by whose authority it was proclaimed; and whose peculiar people you still are.

To the evidence which I have brought forward in these letters, to shew that Jesus was the Messiah, I might add that arising from the lives and conduct of the Apostles of Jesus, who, like their divine Master, and your ancient prophets, forfeited their lives in the cause of truth, and chiefly by the hands of their countrymen. I might add the early triumphs of Christianity, under circumstances the most trying and discouraging; and by

means, humanly speaking, the least likely to promote the end. I might also add the miracles of Jesus; miracles as well attested as those of Moses; I might point out to you the present state of your holy city, and the dispersed, yet united, state of the Sons of Israel, as affording little short of ocular demonstration of Jesus being the Messiah. I might, with little trouble, from the works of Doctor Paley, Bishop Butler, and others, fill volumes on this subject. I might prove to you that all the books composing the New Testament were written by the men whose name they bear, and that they are entitled to our reverence as fully as any of the books of the Old Testament written by Moses or your prophets; but to do this would carry me far beyond the limits which I have prescribed to myself. Should what I have said induce you, or your brethren, to read the works of these authors, my wishes will be realized. No person, Jew or Christian, who wishes for information concerning his religion, and who is really in search of truth, ought to be without the 'Evidences' of Paley and the 'Analogy' of Butler, and the cheap editions of these render them easily attainable.*

An impartial perusal of these authors will probably lead you to the conclusion that Christianity

* They may be had for two shillings each, in boards, of N. Hailes, at the Museum, Piccadilly. Those who wish for more extended information than these works supply, are recommended to peruse *The Credibility of the Gospel History*, by Dr. Lardner. From this standard work, Dr. Paley and all more recent writers have largely

rests on a broader basis than Judaism. The latter, tradition excepted, rests almost solely upon the evidence of the Jewish Scriptures. But Christianity embraces both the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, which mutually strengthen and elucidate each other. It has also in its favour a history more recent and more perfect than Judaism. To the Christian it appears certain that if his religion is not of divine origin, it is impossible that *yours* can be true. Your prophecies hold out to you no hopes of any other Messiah than he who is already come. Examine, therefore, I earnestly and affectionately entreat you, the evidences produced by Christian writers, to shew that Jesus was the true Messiah. Your duty and your interest are alike concerned in this examination. Without such examination you can hardly be considered as consistent believers in your own religion; without such an examination you must be considered as ill-informed, prejudiced, and afraid to examine the grounds of any religious faith differing from your own.

I remain, &c.

borrowed. The perusal of this work may be more acceptable to Jews from its author being an Anti-trinitarian, and entertaining the same sentiments as devout Jews, concerning the undivided Godhead and absolute supremacy of JEHOVAH. And here it may be remarked that many of the most able defenders of Christianity have been Anti-trinitarians.

LETTER VI.

AN OBJECTION PROPOSED.

“And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off, and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks : nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree ; and none shall make them afraid : for the mouth of the LORD of Hosts hath spoken it.”—*Micah* iv. 3. 4. ; *Isaiah* ii. 4.

“The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard lie down with the kid ; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed ; their young ones shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountains, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.”—*Isaiah* xi. 6—9.

SIR,

The prophecies which I have selected as the subject of this letter, present a most lively and delightful picture of those blessings the world is destined to enjoy when the reign, or the religion, of the Messiah shall be established ; or when “The knowledge of the LORD shall cover the earth.” These prophecies, from the cheering hopes they hold out, are highly deserving the serious examination of men of all nations, of believers and unbelievers, but more particularly of Christians and Jews. They contain the prophetic

records of your future greatness, and of the more perfect state of society hereafter to be established throughout the world, by your instrumentality.

To the kind of evidence advanced in the preceding letters, to shew that Jesus was the true Messiah, many plausible objections have been brought; a number of which you will find stated and answered by Dr. Paley.

The only objection which I propose to notice in this letter, and which is, I believe, the most commonly urged, arises out of the non-fulfilment of the prophecies I have affixed to this letter. It is remarked that these have never received their completion in the followers of Jesus. That, instead of living in peace and security, they seem to have taken pleasure in war, and to have been exposed to all the calamities and changes incident to Pagan and warlike nations. However valid such reasoning may be in the mouth of a Mohammedan, a Pagan, or a deist, it certainly ought not to be urged by a well-informed Jew, for it undermines the foundation of the religion of Moses, as well as that of Christ.

I readily admit, that the reasons generally assigned by Christian writers for the non-fulfilment of those prophecies, are little likely to induce unbelievers to embrace Christianity. To these latter it will appear puerile and unsatisfactory to say, with Soame Jennings, that "When Christian nations shall become nations of Christians, wars will cease." Or with Bishop Watson, that "When the

spirit of Christianity shall exert its proper influence over the minds of individuals, and especially over the minds of public men in their public capacities, war will cease throughout the Christian world."

That men holding high ecclesiastical or political situations should thus express themselves, is in the common course of things ; but, as it seemed right to God, in the promulgation of the Gospel, to reject the scribes, the pharisees, and men possessing political power, so it seems probable that, in regenerating Christians, he will observe the same economy ; that he will not make choice of popes, of patriarchs, of prelates, or of princes ; but, as before observed, that he will again choose " The foolish things (men) of the world to confound the wise ; and the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty ;"—" that no flesh should glory in his presence." In God's selecting a nation of so little political consequence as yours is at present, for propagating the Gospel of Peace, and realizing to the world these glorious prophecies, this principle will be acted upon ; and in *the seed of Abraham all the nations of the earth will be blessed.*

Arguments or assertions, such as those of Soame Jennings and Bishop Watson, may satisfy such Christians as are previously convinced of the truth of Christianity on other grounds ; but they are little likely to add one Jew, pagan, or deist, to the religion of Jesus. When addressed with such

arguments, unbelievers, who are capable of reasoning, will naturally say to Christian teachers or missionaries, your religion may be intrinsically a good one; it may be a religion inculcating "glory to God, and peace on earth," but we are inclined to form our opinion of any religion from its effects; and, to judge of yours from these, we feel no inclination to embrace it. We are sure, from authority, which *you* ought not to question, that "a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit." You Christians tell us that your religion will give peace to a troubled world; you call its author the Prince of Peace; and are excessive in its praise; but what has it produced in eighteen hundred years? Let history and prophecy decide, whether what is called Christianity be the religion the Messiah was to establish. Mr. Faber, a writer of your own, who wishes to convert us, lays it down as an established rule, "*To allow no interpretation of prophecy to be valid, except the prophecy agree in every particular with the event to which it is supposed to relate.*" Taking this rule for our guide, we conclude that Christians, or Mr. Faber, cannot justly apply the prophecies in question to Christianity, for they are, in *many important particulars*, at variance with all history, sacred and profane.

You, Sir, have supplied me with an answer to the above, and to similar objections. You say that "*If the doctrines of Christianity are true, there does not, in reality, exist a Christian nation.*"

Though we may rejoice that there are, perhaps, at present a greater number of good men and pious individuals among Christians, than at any former period, yet with nations the case is very different, and of those that are called Christians, your prophet Isaiah might indeed say, in reading their history, "How is the faithful city become an harlot! It was full of judgment, righteousness lodged in it: but now murderers. Thy silver is become dross; thy wine mixed with water; thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves; every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards; they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them." Isa. i. 21—23.

The darkness, and consequent wickedness, which prevail in Christian nations, supply an answer to the objections of Jews and unbelievers, an answer which ought to humble the Christian. But that this answer is a just one, the Christian is assured by the "sure voice of prophecy;" as I shall endeavour to shew in my next letter.

Before, however, I conclude this letter, it is pleasing to me to remark, that those very prophecies which have so long supplied sceptics with a very powerful argument against the Christian religion, appear to be gradually progressing towards their completion. The predicted *gross darkness*, which, for so many centuries, has covered the earth, appears to be dissipating, and the *evening time when is shall be light*, approaching with a slow, but very perceptible step. Thinking men

of all religious creeds appear to be getting sick of the miseries of war ; and the religion of Christianity, which in early ages triumphed over the obstacles opposed to it by Pagan institutions, begins again to correct the false notions of military glory, that have so long prevailed and exerted so baneful an influence over the minds of men in all nations, and in all ranks of society.

It is a fact no less singular than delightful to the lover of peace, and the Christian, that very shortly after the conclusion of the late sanguinary war, two societies, one in England, the other in America, sprung up simultaneously, and without communication with each other ; for the purpose of shewing, by the distribution of tracts, that the practice of national wars was directly opposed to the spirit and precepts of Christianity. These societies, which have since that time greatly increased, have been patronised by men of piety and learning ; particularly in America, where they have been joined by men of political influence. It is to be hoped these societies may be hailed as the first-fruits of a glorious and prolific harvest, as a sure pledge that the pacific kingdom of the Messiah is increasing.

Though the two prophecies I have quoted are expressed in language so very dissimilar, they may both be considered as descriptive of the same glorious event. Of these prophecies, and various others, both in the Old and New Testament, the signs of the times afford abundant reason to sup-

pose that they are in progress of completion.* This agreement in prophecies, delivered by Jewish and Christian prophets, at different periods of time, affords strong presumption of the divine origin of the whole, and consequently strengthens the testimony that Jesus was the Messiah.

In whatever way we apply the symbols of the *wolf and the lamb, the leopard and the kid, &c. &c.*; whether we apply them to individuals or to nations, or as personifications of the good and evil passions, the glorious result will be the same. A new moral creation will spring up, which Isaiah thus describes, "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind."

If the signs of the times indicate that individuals and nations, of cruel and ferocious habits, like the wolf, the leopard, and the lion, are becoming humanized by Christianity, they likewise afford us the satisfaction of witnessing that the lower classes of society are improving by the operation of the same religion, by science, and by learning; so as to fit them for filling the highest stations in civil society. In fact, what was of very rare occurrence three or four centuries ago, is now by no means uncommon; namely, citizens, or the sons of citizens, sitting at the same national council board, with princes and men of the highest rank. We also see frequently, what in former

* On this subject, the Author begs to refer to his *Apology*, Letter XXV.

days very rarely happened, the sons and daughters of the highest families intermarrying with those of citizens; almost literally fulfilling the prophecy, that "the leopard shall lie down with the kid." The contemplation of these events, however disagreeable to persons of high aristocratic principles, affords a source of high gratification to the philanthropist and Christian philosopher, and holds out powerful incitements to piety and virtue. It seems an anticipation of that more perfect state of bliss, when the present artificial distinctions of rank among rational beings will cease; when riches will be of less value, and obedience to God the source of honour and happiness. These are the truths, and they are glorious truths which the Gospel of Jesus reveals to mankind; and the way to obtain this happiness is not "so awfully mysterious, as to make reason stand aghast," but so plain, "that he who runs may read." It is to love Jehovah with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves. Your prophets point out the effects of this love and obedience. Men will cease to learn war: and "JEHOVAH shall be king over all the earth: in that day he shall be one and his name one."

By thus applying the prophecies, they are rendered morally and practically useful. They become "a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path." By commentators fancifully applying them to the passing events of our own time, they have done not a little to render prophecy, the

foundation-stone of Christianity, a stumbling-stone and rock of offence, instead of being a light that shineth in a dark place, to guide men to the knowledge of the Messiah, and thus lead them into all profitable truth.

I remain, &c.

LETTER VII.

THE OBJECTION ANSWERED.

“ Let no man deceive you by any means ; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first ; and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition ; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped ; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.”—2 *Thess.* ii. 3, 4. ; *Daniel* vii. 25.

SIR,

THE difference of opinion between the Jews and Christians, respecting the advent of the Messiah, I take to be this. The former deny that he is yet come ; and, as has been said, assign the sins of their nation as one great cause of God's delaying to send him. The latter affirm that Jesus of Nazareth was the true Messiah, and all national churches have formally acknowledged him as such ; but war, rapine, revolution, and vice, proclaim with a voice that cannot be misunderstood, that a *falling away* has taken place, and that Christians have departed from their allegiance to Jesus. In point of criminality in disobeying the divine command by Moses, the difference between the Jew and the Christian is not so great as the latter generally supposes ; and the disobedience of both justifies the mercy and justice of God in the dispersion of the Jews, and

the punishment of Christians, by sanguinary and revolutionary wars. This disobedience also shews satisfactorily, without adventurously diving into "*The unsearchable wisdom of God,*" the cause of the almost total failure of Christian missionaries.

The apostle Paul, or rather God by his holy prophet, (for Paul's miracles and inspiration are as well attested as those of Moses,) foretells this disobedience.—He tells us plainly, that before the final success of Christ's religion, a *falling away* was to take place, "and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." The same antichristian person, or power, appears to be alluded to by the apostle John, as Antichrist, by denying (and, consequently, disobeying) both the Father and the Son. (1 John ii. 22.) The same irreligious person or power, is alluded to by the prophet Daniel, particularly in chap. vii. 25. This agreement between the prophecies, as well as the morality, of the Old and New Testaments, and which agreement is very general, must lead you to suppose that Jesus and his apostles were devout Jews, and that they had diligently perused *your* Scriptures. I mention this as an inducement to you, and your countrymen, to peruse *their* writings with the same diligence and impartiality.

Allowing this apostasy from the Christian faith to have taken place, your objection to Jesus being the Messiah, on account of the non-fulfilment of the prophecies concerning him, ceases to be valid. That such an apostasy has taken place, and that it is at present in operation, facts the most obvious testify; for, it may safely be asserted, there is not one Christian nation to which the prophecies concerning the Messiah's kingdom can be applied with the least propriety. There is not one Christian nation, whose laws do not, in many respects, run counter to the laws delivered by Moses, and the precepts delivered by Christ. As you observe, "*If the doctrines of Christianity are true, there does not, in reality, exist a Christian nation.*" These facts, therefore, being in accordance with both Jewish and Christian prophecies, afford a satisfactory answer to cavillers; and, instead of proving that Jesus was not the Messiah, they greatly add to the probability that he was; and afford an accumulation of evidence, which it will be difficult to rebut, that both the Jewish and Christian revelations are of divine origin.

However available arguments founded on the present state of the world, may be to the Deist, the Mohammedan, or the Pagan, the candid and well-informed Jew ought, by no means, to urge them. The history of his own nation will shew that his forefathers, like the present race of Christians, were a stiff-necked generation, and prone to idolatry; "worshipping idols which had eyes, and

saw not; which their own hands had made and formed." * (Isaiah xlv. 9, and xlvi. 5—9.) The apostasy of Christians, therefore, and their proneness to worship *an object of sense*, is no more a proof that Jesus was not the Messiah, than the idolatries of your forefathers are to be considered a proof that Moses was not divinely commissioned.

The pure spiritual worship of Jehovah has had, and continues to have, many obstacles opposed to its progress. The religion of Jesus, by becoming the religion of the Roman empire, had some of the idolatries of the Pagans early ingrafted upon it. That a part of these idolatries now remain in 'popish countries, the zealous Protestant boldly asserts. He sees "the mote in his brother's eye, but cannot discern the beam in his own eye."

Should it turn out that the Protestant also is in error, and he must be either a bold or ill-informed Christian who denies this, many things conspire to keep him so. Hierarchies are opposed to all change, and, consequently, to all improve-

* "It is evident that the ancient idolaters did not set up their images as final objects of worship, as being gods in themselves, but as places of divine residence, wherein the genii or spirits of the gods dwell, and afford their special presence; or as *representatives* of their gods, however the most sottish of the people might otherwise conceive."—*Collyer's Sacred Interpreter*, page 312.

Modern missionaries attack Pagans in language corresponding to that of Isaiah, but it seems probable that these Pagans entertain ideas not very dissimilar to those of ancient idolaters. On this subject I beg to refer to an extract from a *Brahminical Magazine*, contained in my Letter to Mr. Faber, already alluded to. (See pages 118 and 119.)

ment. The sovereign, in most Protestant and Catholic states, is bound by his coronation oath to keep things, as they regard religion, in the same state he finds them, consequently, to protect a religion which inculcates a *sensible object of worship*. The two principal universities of Britain may be considered as peculiarly the privileged guardians of this dogma. On entering these seminaries, rendered venerable and imposing by their antiquity, their magnificence, and their learning, the uninstructed youth is obliged to surrender his Christian liberty, and to bind himself to serve two masters, namely, the *church* and *state*.—If by the former is meant the Christian religion, and by the latter, established laws and customs, the requirements of these are often as much opposed to each other as truth is to error.

The privileged persons from these seminaries, with a degree of violence and rancour irreconcilable with the spirit of Christ's religion, have, as their writings will abundantly prove, held up to public scorn and indignation those who have dared to oppose them. And using, or rather abusing, the influence that wealth, patronage, and learning have placed in their hands, they have done all in their power to render perpetual, a *sensible object of religious worship*.

By representing those who maintain that JEHOVAH is not three, as a set of men who deny the Lord that bought them,—as no better than concealed deists or infidels, Jews or Mohammedans,—

as alike the enemies of Christianity and social order,—as men who are more fit to be turned over to the civil magistrates, than to be argued with as reasonable beings: by such unworthy arts, the orthodox, aided by the influence arising from learning, from wealth, and from popular prejudices, have opposed a strong barrier to religious inquiry; and have rendered men not only averse, but afraid to look into any book maintaining the exclusive worship of JEHOVAH, lest they should forfeit the honours, the wealth, and the pleasures attendant on orthodoxy. They have thus, to a certain degree, paralysed even the press, the great engine of moral regeneration. But notwithstanding these obstructions; and notwithstanding the demoralizing effects of the richly-endowed religious establishments of Europe, the sun of righteousness is dispelling the *gross darkness* which for so many ages has covered the earth, and the glorious truths that “JEHOVAH is king over all the earth;” that “he is one and his name one,” are beginning to be acknowledged by Christians. To the sons of Israel is allotted the high honour of establishing these truths *over all the earth*.

Christianity, as it has often been remarked, has suffered more from injudicious and luke-warm friends, than from avowed enemies. This remark, I am sorry to say, applies to the only sect that maintains, without reservation, and in the plain and obvious meaning of the expression, that JEHOVAH *is one*. This sect has been sneeringly

called rational Christians ; but in some particulars, the conduct of many of them appears to be most irrational. The wide, the essential difference between Unitarianism and Trinitarianism, does not seem to be impressed on their minds; yet, in strictness, this difference is as great as between monotheism and polytheism ; as great as between worshipping the Creator, and his highly exalted creature ; or a pure invisible spirit, and *an object of sense*. Notwithstanding this great difference, many of these rational Christians attend alternately the worship of a pure invisible spirit, or of *an object of sense*, as caprice, curiosity, a mistaken sense of duty, or as opportunity may permit.

Good men naturally feel veneration for the religion in which they have been brought up ; the religion of their forefathers ; the religion of their dearest friends and connexions ; the religion of the great majority of those to whom they have been accustomed to look up as the wise, the virtuous, and excellent of the earth. Though convinced of its errors, they quit it with extreme regret, to embrace an unpopular religion ; a religion likely to render them obnoxious, and to interfere with the worldly prospects of themselves, and their families, in various ways. To do this, even in the present age, may be compared to forsaking *father and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters*. That the laity and persons whose minds are not, perhaps, decidedly made up concerning the person and offices of the Messiah ;

that they should shrink from this trial, and wish to continue, occasionally at least, to join in social religious worship with their dear friends, is not to be wondered at. But this practice is not confined to the laity: strange as it may appear, I have known Unitarian ministers, on the very same day, teach their flocks the exclusive worship of JEHOVAH, and themselves attend the worship of *an object of sense* !! The excuse is that the Unitarian hears there much that is good and instructive. The same excuse would avail him in attending Catholic or Jewish worship.

I have also known men of consequence, as to talent and wealth, among those rational Christians, men who profess themselves to be zealous worshippers of JEHOVAH, send their children to be educated by ministers of the established church, to seminaries where the worship of *an object of sense* forms a branch of their education. Children thus educated, if they think at all, must suppose that Unitarianism and Trinitarianism include the worship of the same God, and that it is of little consequence to them whether they go to church or chapel, to a Jewish synagogue or a Catholic church.

Thus, Sir, you will perceive that the pure spiritual worship of JEHOVAH has been greatly impeded even by those who profess themselves to be its only advocates. But, notwithstanding the various obstacles that the worship of the one living and true God has had to contend with, it gains

ground in Europe, in Asia, and particularly in America. Its supporters become more numerous and more bold ; its opposers less fierce and vehement ; and Trinitarianism becomes more widely to be regarded as a *falling away* from the Christian faith.

Allowing that Christians have apostatized, the evidence of the truth of their religion from a long and connected series of prophecies, Jewish and Christian, becomes so perfectly reconcileable, and even agreeable with the testimony of history, both sacred and profane, as to remove, as already observed, the most weighty objection that has ever been urged against the Christian religion ; rendering it not only highly probable, but almost morally certain, that Jesus was the Messiah. However important this inquiry may be to Christians, it appears to be still more so to Jews ; for on the advent of the Messiah hinges all their future greatness.

I remain, &c.

LETTER VIII.

THE JEWS DESTINED TO BE THE SOLE FINALLY SUCCESSFUL PREACHERS OF THE RELIGION OF THE MESSIAH.

“ Thus saith the Lord of hosts : It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people and the inhabitants of many cities : and the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go up speedily to pray before the Lord, to seek the Lord of hosts. I will go also. Yes, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts : In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold, out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.”—*Zech.* viii. 20—23.

SIR,

IN an age like the present, when every species of learning connected with the propagation of the Christian religion is prosecuted with indefatigable diligence and zeal ; when we have societies for promoting Christian knowledge ; for the distribution of the Bible, &c., patronised by the most learned, the most pious, and exalted of our nation ; when missionaries are sent out to distant countries by various sects of dissenters, as well as by the established church of England ;—in such an age, and under such auspicious circumstances, it may seem bold to assert

he is one and his name one ; as expressed in the first and great commandment, *Hear, O Israel, &c.* I would here pause, and ask those Christians who take so much interest in your conversion, a few serious questions.

I. Is it at all probable that they, the *foundation* stone of whose religion is, that JEHOVAH is *three*, and his name *three*, should succeed in persuading either Jews or Gentiles that he *is one*, and his name *one* ? Is it at all likely that they, who teach that there are three persons or beings, * each of whom is *uncreated, incomprehensible, eternal, almighty* ; each of whom is *Lord*, each of whom is *God*, should succeed in persuading Pagan nations that there is only one *God*, one *Lord*, one *Almighty* person or being ? A person unused to polemical casuistry, will pronounce this to be either polytheism or atheism, and will ask, how there can be three *supreme* persons or beings that are co-equal ? If there are three that are co-eternal, how can there be only *one first cause* ? If there are *three* that are co-equal, how can there be *one* that is supreme ? how can there be *one* supreme God ? The effects of atheism and polytheism may be considered as similar ; and in many countries called Christian, these effects have been truly deplorable.

* Bishop Burgess gets over these difficulties, by assuming that a person does not mean a being ; thus removing a difficulty by advancing an absurdity.

II. Allowing that when "*Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem,*" a new order of things, a new creation shall arise, that virtue will succeed to vice, peace to war, and that men will *beat their swords into ploughshares*;—allowing, also, that unerring wisdom is one of the attributes of JEHOVAH, I would ask if it is at all probable that he will select any one of the belligerent nations of Europe, to preach the *Gospel of Peace* successfully to Gentile nations? The greater part of these must know that the nations sending forth missionaries, live in a total disregard of this Gospel, and of its divine author, the Prince of Peace; making war whenever it suits their interest, or their inclination; and carrying their conquests to the remotest parts of the world. Is it at all probable, I would ask the benevolent society attempting your conversion, that Jehovah will select any of the nations of Europe to convert the Gentile world? Is it at all desirable that you should be converted by them; and, laying aside your peaceful habits, that you should become a warlike nation, spreading wider the empire of war and slaughter.

III. Meekness and humility may be considered as superlatively necessary to the formation of the Christian character. Christianity cannot exist without them: they form the very ground-work of the preaching of Christ. "Blessed are the meek." "Blessed are the poor in spirit."—"Take my

yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart."—To shew the high degree of estimation in which Jesus held these virtues, one of the very last acts of his life was to wash the feet of his disciples; and thus, by his example, as well as his precepts, to exhort them to practise this virtue; and also to teach them that Christian ministers were all brethren, and that they were not to *exercise dominion* over each other, like the *princes of the Gentiles*. Connecting these things with the remark of Jesus, that "A rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of God," or become a sincere Christian: bearing all these things in mind, can we suppose that he who, in the exercise of his unerring wisdom, selected Jesus and his humble followers to fulfil his divine purposes, will choose any of the richly-endowed ecclesiastical establishments of Europe, to teach humility to Gentile nations? Are not all these establishments governed by rich men? Do not all these follow the example of the princes of the Gentiles?

I have mentioned only a few of the causes that might be produced, to shew the high improbability, that a God of unerring wisdom should select the clergy of any of the orthodox establishments of Europe to convert either Jews or Gentiles to the religion of Jesus. The fact that they have altogether failed to do this, during more than three hundred years since what has been called the Reformation, demonstrates the unfitness of Protestants (as well as of Catholics) for this great

undertaking. Years may elapse before a good tree shall bring forth good fruit ; but we may rest assured that a good tree cannot, during a succession of ages, produce bad fruit. The Protestant tree, therefore, as well as the Catholic, we may suppose to be corrupt.

Of all the efforts made by ecclesiastical establishments to convert Jews and Gentiles, none seem so hopeless as those of the church of England. That a church with a clergy more learned ; with funds greater than any, perhaps greater than all the national churches of Europe ; with bequests from pious men in former ages to an unknown amount ; with forced contributions from all who dissent from its doctrines, whether believers or unbelievers, thus desecrating its temples ; with an army (though not under its command) ready to crush or overawe its adversaries, in one part of the empire ; with schools richly endowed under its direct controul ; with two universities more learned and rich than any in the world, forming an integral part of its constitution, and exercising an immense influence over the minds of youth ; that a church placed in such highly favourable circumstances and not able to advance, or even hold its ground at home, should indulge the expectation of extending its empire in distant countries, seems difficult to account for on common principles of action. Of all missionary speculations, that of the church seems to promise the least success.

Having spoken of the unfitness of Christians to convert the Gentile world, I will now offer a few observations concerning the qualifications of your nation for this great work, i. e. when it shall have embraced Christianity. Before I enter upon the subject, permit me to remark that your ancient prophets, in their writings, consider the whole world as divided into two classes, *Jews and Gentiles*. In the prophecies quoted by Mr. F. in his sermon, it is to be observed, that no allusion is made to *converted Gentiles*, or to any *nations* in the *latter days*, as the *true worshippers* of JEHOVAH. Your prophet Isaiah, alluding to these days, says, “*Behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people.*” Connecting this with Isaiah ii. 3., lx. 1—5., and Zech. xiv. 9., it may be inferred that all nations, namely, all those nations to whom these prophecies *specially* relate, that is, such as should not *beat their swords into ploughshares*; such as should not acknowledge that JEHOVAH is *king over all the earth*, that *he is one and his name one*; from a connected view of these and other corresponding prophecies, it may reasonably be inferred that all such *nations* are to be considered as in a state of *gross darkness*, and have yet to receive the benefit of the *living waters from Jerusalem, of the law which shall go forth out of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem*; for these expressions may be considered as equivalent.

Assuming then, with you, that there is not one Christian nation,* certainly not one in whom these prophecies have been fulfilled; I may, without presumption, go further than Mr. F. has done, and maintain that the converted Jews are destined to regenerate all apostatized Christian nations, as well as to be *the sole successful missionaries to the Gentile world*.—If not, it will follow that, whilst heathen nations are to be reclaimed from war, from vice, and idolatry; and are to experience a new moral creation, and dwell in peace and security;—it will plainly follow, that apostatized Christians are to remain in their present apostasy, exposed to the horrors of vice, of war, and insecurity. But the prophet tells us, that, as *gross darkness* was to COVER THE EARTH, so, also, was *the knowledge of the Lord* likewise TO COVER THE EARTH.

Great and wonderful as were the honours and benefits conferred on your forefathers in the early ages of the world, those that are reserved for you, or your successors, are of a nature to be still more

* This seems to be in substance admitted by Dr. Paley. In his *Evidences of Christianity*, chap. vii., on the supposed effects of Christianity, he says; "The influence of religion is not to be sought for in the councils of princes, in the debates or resolutions of popular assemblies, in the conduct of governments towards their subjects, or states or sovereigns towards one another; of conquerors at the head of their armies; or of parties intriguing for power at home; (topics which alone almost occupy the attention and fill the pages of history;) but must be perceived, *if perceived at all*, in the silent course of private and domestic life."

highly valued by pious and benevolent minds. If, therefore, JEHOVAH has suffered you to be afflicted more than any other nation, you may be assured that your afflictions are intended for your benefit, to render you worthy to be restored to the favour of God, and better qualified for the important duties and high honours that are destined for your nation.

Concerning your future greatness, which your prophets always speak of as subsequent to the advent of the Messiah, the apostle Paul, a man of your own nation, and well read in the law and the prophets, speaks decidedly :

“ God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid : but rather through their fall, salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now, if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness? For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?” ROM. xi. 2, 11, 12, 15.

From this opinion, or prediction of the apostle Paul, taken in connexion with the predictions already quoted, concerning your future greatness, it seems reasonable to infer, that, by your long and unparalleled sufferings, the great Ruler of the world has been training you in the school of adversity, which may be considered as the school of wisdom, for the exalted honours and peculiar

duties which require this severe discipline. If rendering you, as a nation, more faithful, more obedient to the divine will, more meek, more lowly in spirit, more peaceable, you will necessarily be better fitted to instruct Pagans in the pacific principles of the religion of Jesus, than any of the belligerent nations of Europe. These, from being by education imbued with Grecian and Roman principles, are rendered averse to the humiliating doctrines of forgiving insults and injuries, and the non-resistance of evil. You will also have a much better chance than any Trinitarians of persuading Gentile nations to receive the first and great commandment, *Hear, O Israel, &c.* This commandment, *in its literal meaning*, all sects of Christians reject, with one single exception; and banish from their communion those who receive it in its plain and obvious sense. You, therefore, will have a much better chance than any of these to persuade Gentile nations that **JEHOVAH** is the *blessed and only potentate*.

The similarity, in some particulars, between the history of some of your ancient and revered prophets and that of Jesus, entitles the latter to a fair and diligent examination at your hands. He, like them, suffered by the hands of his countrymen, and in the same glorious cause, the cause of truth; and, like them, he was instructed in the school of adversity. Your sufferings, therefore, instead of shaking your faith in the divine promises, ought to fortify your hopes that you are

not cast off, but that you yet remain the highly-favoured of JEHOVAH; chosen to be blessed yourselves; chosen to be the honoured instruments of conferring blessings upon all the nations of the earth.

Your history, when you shall be restored to the land of your forefathers, will afford such striking and overpowering testimony of the truth of the Jewish and Christian revelations, in the wonderful fulfilment of a long series of prophecies, as to give you a decided advantage over all missionaries, and enable you to put to silence all cavillers and unbelievers. It will also exhibit such strong proofs of the paternal character of JEHOVAH your God, as to incline Gentile nations to believe that he *is king over the whole earth*; that he is *the blessed and only potentate*; and that Jesus is the Messiah, the *Prince of Peace*: all these truths Christian *nations* practically deny. Unlike Christian missionaries, you will not have to encounter the scoffs and revilings of Gentile nations: these will not reproach *you* for carrying war and desolation to the most distant parts of the earth. Though at first you may have to encounter opposition in establishing the *first and great commandment* in its plain and obvious sense, yet your final success is certain. *They will take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.*

As Trinitarians declare themselves to be worshippers of JEHOVAH, or the one-living and true God, I shall, I am aware, be taxed with unfairness and misrepresentation in speaking of Trinitarianism as Tritheism. To such Christians as, after diligent examination, believe that there are really three persons in the Godhead, it would be highly presumptuous, in any fallible being, to attribute the heinous sin of idolatry. But to those who, like your correspondent, not only disbelieve the existence of three separate persons in the Godhead, but regard such a doctrine as subversive of the supremacy of JEHOVAH, and irreconcilable with the *worship of the FATHER*, (and Him only,) *in spirit and in truth*; and consequently as irreconcilable with being *true worshippers** of JEHOVAH: to those who thus disbelieve, whether Jews or Christians, a high degree of criminality attaches, if, by their attendance, they give countenance to doctrines they disbelieve; and not only this, but they ought to seize every proper opportunity of advocating the cause of divine truth, or of vindicating the honour of JEHOVAH, whatever obloquy, whatever ridicule, or whatever suffering they may be exposed to.

If your Scriptures are misinterpreted by Christians, or applied in a way you think derogatory to the honour of JEHOVAH, it surely becomes *your* duty, as the depositaries of the law, to instruct them; for in the excellent speech delivered

* John iv. 23.

by you, you say that *you take it as admitted, that the law was not made for Israel alone, but for the whole human race.* Now Trinitarians, as you probably are aware, apply Gen. i. 26, "let us make man in *our* own image," and also various texts where the Hebrew word *Elohim* (*Gods*) is used in speaking of JEHOVAH, to prove the doctrine of the Trinity. If this is not to be considered merely as the peculiar idiom of the Hebrew language, which, I believe, is the general opinion of learned Jews, it favours polytheism, and opposes the first of all commandments, *Hear, O Israel, &c.* This application of *Elohim* can never, therefore, be admitted by a devout Jew, and it becomes his duty to instruct his Christian brethren, who are taking so much pains to teach and to withdraw the sons of Israel from the faith of their forefathers, and leading them to embrace opinions which you consider as idolatrous.

If there is any truth in these remarks ; and if your nation is to convert all Gentile nations, to remove their errors, and, with these, their crimes, and their miseries : if, in the seed of Abraham, all the nations of the earth are to be blessed : if, also, the time of your redemption draweth nigh ; it surely behoves the learned men of your nation, and particularly your learned rabbins, to quit the state of literary seclusion, in which you have

* See Mr. Faber's Sermon, p. 27—32. Mr. F. says, alluding to this time, "*It is near at hand, as near in truth, as to be, comparatively at least, at our very doors.*"

so long remained, and to enter the field of friendly religious discussion with your Christian brethren. Among these, there are many entertaining the same sentiments as yourselves, concerning the unity and absolute supremacy of JEHOVAH, who would be glad to hear and answer your objections, to the Messiahship of Jesus. By such a line of conduct you may both give and receive benefit. You will be told by the orthodox, that the doctrine of the Trinity is the current doctrine of the New Testament, or Covenant ; that it is expressed or implied in almost every page ; that it is *dove-tailed* into the sacred volume ; but a little patient examination will convince you that the reverse is true. *

* In the New Testament, there are *seventeen* passages wherein the *Father* is styled *one or only God*, and not a single passage in which the *Son* is so styled. There are three hundred and twenty passages in which the *Father* is absolutely, and by way of *eminence*, called God ; whilst there is not one in which the *Son* is so called. There are one hundred and five in which the *Father* is denominated God, with *peculiarly high titles and epithets*, whereas the *Son* is not once so denominated. There are ninety passages wherein it is declared that *all prayers and praises* ought to be offered up to the *Father*, and that every thing ought to be ultimately directed to his *honour and glory* ; whilst of the *Son* no such declaration is ever made. There are thirteen hundred passages wherein the word *God* is mentioned, not one of which necessarily implies the existence of more than *one person* in the Godhead, or that this one is any other than the *Father*. There are above three hundred passages wherein the *Son* is declared, positively, or by the clearest implication, to be *subordinate to the Father*, deriving his being from Him, receiving from Him his divine power, and acting in all things according to his will ! ! See an American tract entitled, '*Arguments in Favour of Unitarianism*.'—The difficulties arising from this accu-

In the discharge of the honourable duty you are destined to fulfil, you must lay your account with having much opposition and obloquy to encounter, not only from your own nation, but from Christians; not only from the ignorant, the interested, and the wicked, but from the learned, the pious, and the well-intentioned.

May JEHOVAH bless you, and bestow upon you the same spirit which he conferred upon your ancient prophets, the same spirit which he bestowed upon Jesus and his apostles; not the *spirit of fear*, but *the spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind*! However arduous the great duty you are destined to perform, yet, to stimulate you to exertion, you are assured, on the word of JEHOVAH, that you will finally succeed. Permit me, therefore, in concluding these letters, again to refer you to those cheering prophecies so often quoted; and to intreat you to impress them upon the minds of your children; *to talk of them when you sit in the house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.*

mulation of evidence, are got over by assuming, for no such doctrine is stated by Jesus or his Apostles, that he possessed *two natures*; that he was, at the same time, the great JEHOVAH, and a man liable to suffering, a man *like unto his brethren*. An impartial examination of the Christian Scriptures will probably convince you, that they contain no such doctrine, at which *reason stands aghast, and faith herself is half confounded*. Of this opinion were Sir Isaac Newton, John Milton, John Locke, and a multitude of the most learned and zealous defenders of Christianity.

“ Thus saith the Lord of Hosts : It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities : and the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying ; Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts : I will go also. Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts : In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all the languages of the nations, even of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying ; We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.”

I cannot take my leave of you and your countrymen without offering a few remarks on the present unfavourable crisis for addressing you. In a nation considered the most moral and religious of all nations, the inhabitants, instead of being actuated by mutual principles of forbearance and brotherly love, are torn by dissensions, and divided into two hostile factions, animated with anti-christian feelings and principles. But their religion is not pure Christianity ; it is rather, if I may be permitted the expression, Christianity run mad : and it seems no unreasonable supposition that the same principles from whence proceed the cries of *Church and State*, and *No Popery*, are nearly allied in origin to those of your forefathers when they cried, *‘ Away with him, crucify him.’* And it is not a little singular that those who use them, avail themselves of the same excuse for their violence. *‘ If we let them thus alone, the Romans will come, and take away our place and nation.’*

We cannot doubt that many of those who now vociferate *No Popery*, whether clergymen or laymen, collegians or mechanics, would, had they been placed in the same situation as the craftsmen of Ephesus, have cried out, *Great is Diana of the Ephesians* ! Their principle of action is the same.

To the credit of these men, it may be observed, that they have neither the hypocrisy nor the audacity to pretend that Christianity is in danger, by the proposed benevolent act of their sovereign and his servants. The great cry is, that the *government by church and state is in danger*. If you inquire of the oppressed Irish what this government is, they will tell you that by it they have been worse dealt by than your forefathers in Egypt. These had *the flesh-pots of Egypt and bread to the full*, but, though living in a land producing both in abundance, little have they tasted of either. They have been fed chiefly on the same food as their swine, and of this only a scanty supply. They have been worse dealt by than *the ox that treadeth out the corn*. And now when, like the worm trodden upon, they turn again, the members and even some of the ministers of the Gospel of Peace call out for the sword and the bayonet; they have got, say they, the '*vantage ground*' and they will keep it. But judge not, I pray you, of Christianity by the conduct of its professors, any more than of your own religion by the idolatries of your forefathers. But their ways are not the ways of wisdom, they are not *the ways of plea-*

saptness, nor their paths, the paths of peace. To many of them may properly be addressed the language of Isaiah to your forefathers, "*Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive. For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and be converted, and I should heal them.*" That they are hastening the crisis they wish to avert, is evident to every person of intelligence and impartiality.

As one great end of Christianity is to render men more moral and religious, and consequently, more peaceable and easy to be governed; and as these ends are now answered among dissenters, (who may be considered as the most peaceable of subjects,) and this without national expense, it requires not the sagacity nor prescience of a Daniel to foresee (when these desirable ends can be answered without expense) that some future prince, or his counsellors, either more deeply imbued with Christian principles, or altogether destitute of them, or pressed by necessity, will remove their greatest bane,—the loaves and fishes. When this shall be done, it may again be said of Christians; '*See how they love each other!*' at present, you may with justice exclaim, '*See how they hate each other.*' Though I am far from believing that the clergy are generally actuated

by mercenary views, yet I run no risk in affirming that our present danger of civil commotion could not have arrived had there been no loaves and fishes. But let neither the feuds of Christians nor their creeds, nor yet, let your own traditions, or your long-imbibed prejudices, interfere when you sit down to examine the evidences of Scripture concerning the Messiahship of Jesus. Whatever may be the conduct of those who are called after his revered name, HE is still the *Messiah*, the *Prince of Peace*, even though they should act as the demons of war and discord.

I intreat you, and my Jewish brethren, to accept the sincere wishes of a humble individual that you may speedily be restored to the favour of JEHOVAH, and that the honours destined for the seed of Abraham may be more durable than has been your adversity. Accept also, Sir, my sincere wishes for your personal health and happiness; and my assurances that I am, with much sincerity and respect,

Your friend and humble servant,

THOMAS THRUSH.

BELLE VUE, HARROGATE,
March 6, 1829.

POSTSCRIPT.

SINCE completing the preceding letter, (the others being already printed,) I have read in the same paper which contained your excellent speech, a notice that you intend, previous to your return to Florida, to publish a *Plan for the Abolition of Negro Slavery throughout the World*, and a work on the *Nature and Condition of Man*. In both these works, to prejudge them by the contents of your speech, you will necessarily advocate the cause which *your Messiah* was to advocate, and which Jesus certainly did advocate. Of him, more than of any one who ever lived, it may be said, that JEHOVAH *anointed him to preach glad tidings to the meek; to bind up the broken-hearted; to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.** This, Sir, is a glorious cause, and I sincerely congratulate you and your brethren upon its being taken up by one of the *seed of Abraham* so well qualified to do it justice. When Jews and Christians shall be guided by the same divine law, of *doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly before God*; when they shall both worship the same God; when they shall rival each other in obedience to the great command, *Hear, O Israel, &c.* we may confidently hope they will go still further, and arrive at the same conclusion concerning the Messiah. If Jesus was not the true Messiah, the time of your restoration may be far, very far distant; and no polar star of prophecy to cheer you. If, on the contrary, you find that Jesus is the true Messiah, your redemption may be considered as near at hand. Your own prophets hold out to you strong incitements to inquiry.

* Isaiah lxi. 1—5.

Permit me, in addition to the cheering prophecies already quoted, to continue the quotation I have just made from your prophet Isaiah : "*To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God ; to comfort all that mourn. To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness ; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified. And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations. And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your ploughmen, and your vine-dressers.*"

I trust, Sir, that I may consider your works as the harbingers of the fulfilment of these glorious tidings to your long afflicted nation ; or, rather, as the harbingers of those *living waters* that are to flow from Jerusalem, and which, at no very distant period, are to produce these mighty changes.

T. T.

APPENDIX.

At a Meeting of Jews and Christians held at the King's Head, in the Poultry, the following extraordinary and impressive Speech was delivered by MR. LEVY, of Florida.—See WORLD Newspaper of May 28, 1828.

MR. LEVY said, "He was happy that the discussions on this question were now nearly closed. His object, in the opening, had been to shew, that the law was designed to furnish man universally with a motive of action altogether independent of any which his own nature was capable of furnishing, for the purpose of regenerating or ultimately restoring him to his original perfection, through the sole operation of the Word of God. No one had attempted to dispute the position he had laid down, or the arguments by which he had sought to support and illustrate it, and therefore he presumed he might take it as admitted, that the law was not made for Israel alone, but for the whole human race. Some of his Christian friends had argued that the atonement was the end of the law, and that without that, there could be no justification for sin; but he contended, that the doctrine of the incarnation which characterised the Christian dispensation, must be shewn to stand on its own evidence, before it could derive any support from the Old Testament, and then must be admitted to form part of the whole economy of salvation, and not the sole end of the Divine law. It had been argued, that without the atonement there could be no justification, but Deut. vi. 25 led to a different conclusion: "And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as he hath commanded us." The word righteousness there was used in the same sense as the phrase justification in the New Testament; it was to be our justification or righteousness, if we observed the law. But it had been said, that no one could in all respects keep the law, and he admitted it. It was necessary that for the

purpose of justification or righteousness, we should observe the whole of the *commandment*, and not *commandments*; for if we looked to the original, the word would be found כְּלֹמֶתוֹ אֶחָד, *ek kol-mithavah*, in the singular, and not in the plural, as translated. Leading to this conclusion, that it was not the observance of all the commandments which was necessary to justification, but an habitual desire to do the commandment or the will of God, in *every thing*, that being the aim and end of the law. Therefore it was evident he was not arguing, that if a person did the will of God in one part of the law, he might, therefore, violate the rest. With reference to the original dispensation, his friend Mr. Carpenter had argued that Adam must have been placed under some further law than that which regarded the fruit of the tree. But he (Mr. L.) denied the position, because the Bible gave that as the only law; and because we, in our degraded state, could not judge of the perfection of Adam, at the period referred to, as was evident from the great change in his situation, indicated in the sacred narrative, that immediately after this fall "he knew that he was naked." That circumstance shewed, that all the passions of man, even the strongest which he possessed, were entirely absorbed in the love of his Maker, the end and aim of his creation. When that was lost, he was characterised as being under the control of his predominant passions. It had also been argued by the same gentleman, that immediately after the fall, a new dispensation had been introduced, the proof of which had been founded on Gen. iii. 15: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel;" but that would by no means substantiate the doctrine, but through the medium of a gloss, or accommodation, to the fact elsewhere clearly revealed. At the same time, he could not help observing, that if the phrase "seed of the woman" was to be referred to *one person*, so must the phrase, "seed of the serpent" refer to *one* also. On the other hand, it had been argued, that the *serp* was a mere serpent, far otherwise the real agent, who was the devil, escaped the punishment, which fell upon the passive instrument, the reptile; to that, however, he would say, when he looked into the creation, and regarded the different classes of animals, he could not but think that instead of being arbitrarily created in their different orders,—and that without any design,—or according to mere chance,—they would have been created after the pattern of some superior powers, "in the image" of whom they existed; in which case the serpent would be but the representative of its archetype, who equally with itself, would sustain the degradation. With reference to sacrifices, it had been argued, that they were prescribed to Adam, as the only method of expiating sin; but if so, and the establishment of the atonement were the end of the law, where had been the necessity for the introduction of the latter? That, indeed, he feared was a view of this matter too widely entertained in the Christian world, and hence the distinction so commonly drawn between religion and policy, and

spirituals and temporals, as though they could exist independently of each other; whereas they were as closely and intimately united as the body and the soul, the one furnished the field of action for the other. To his Christian friends he would say, bear with me, my fellow-believers, my brethren, my dear brethren, whilst I endeavour, in candour and sincerity, to point out your defects. His object was not to draw an invidious comparison in what he might say, but only to shew the great and appalling difference which existed between the present state of society in the Christian world, and that which was found in Israel, when governed by a law, suited to the nature and exigencies of human society, originating in a *divine*, instead of a *human* authority.

"If the doctrines of Christianity were true, he would contend that there did not, in reality, exist a Christian nation. Was it not manifest that religion was one thing, and legislation another?—a legislation founded on what? On the Roman laws; on human wisdom; intrigue, chicanery, and cunning. Could the operation of the one be compatible with the existence and growth of the other? But lame as the laws might be, were they available to all classes of people alike? No: the poor were excluded from their benefit. Unless the suitor had ten, fifteen, or twenty pounds, to enforce his right, he was precluded from the attainment of justice. In what circumstances were the widow, the orphan, and the oppressed, placed under such a system of monopoly? They were driven to take the law in their own hands; and what was the consequence? Let the calendar answer the question. The number of births in the metropolis were about 30,000 in the year, and the amount of individuals sentenced to transportation, exceeded 5,400 during the same period. The number of families were about 200,000, and the number of females whose mode of life disgraced the streets, was between 60,000 and 70,000. If there were an Isaiah now to proclaim the sins of those who professed to believe and govern themselves by the word of God, would he not raise his voice, and accuse them of sins greater than characterised his nation on the eve of her destruction? "How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers. Thy silver is become dross; thy wine mixed with water; thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves; every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards; they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them." And if such were the case in that which might justly be said to be the most religious country in Europe, what should be said of France, of Spain, of Portugal, of Italy; the Greeks, the Copts, the degraded Abyssinians? But what were they to expect but such a state of things, when they looked into the systems of education which were adopted? Was it not absurd to suppose, that after tainting the mind into the mould of Heathen principles, and fostering the affections according to the same model; after infusing into the mind the obscene principles of polytheism; and firing it with emulation, ambition, and vain-glory; was it not absurd to

suppose, that the principles of revelation would have their due effect, in producing obedience to the will of God? In the school-room, Homer, Virgil, Ovid, Horace, and the like, were the instructors of the youthful mind, in temporal matters and the principles of taste; and on his entrance into the world, the Bible was presented to his acceptance, for the purpose of spiritualising the principles previously generated. Was it necessary to say that so monstrous a system necessarily effected that divorce between secular and spiritual things to which he had referred? Now to institute the comparison of which he had spoken, it would be necessary to refer to that insignificant people, as regarded numbers, the House of Israel. To them a small portion of land was allotted, upon whose inhabitants they were to make war, on the ground of their extreme and unconquerable depravity; but beyond that they were restrained. Thus ambition was limited, and even the exterminating ravages of war were hallowed by the word of God. To restrain the excesses, which to this day disgraced the most civilized countries, in taking a town by storm, a law was ordained that the women and children, that is, persons beneath the age of twenty, were to remain unmolested. Thus the savage disposition of man was checked, and the direful ravages of war restrained by the deliberation which the law required in a victorious soldier. By the divisions of land into small portions among the families, and the admirable institution of the Jubilee, by which all debts were cancelled, and all landed property which had been alienated, reverted to its original possessor, the extremes of poverty and riches were prevented. To prevent the abuse of power, which the accumulation of riches gives rise to, it was rendered obligatory on them to lend to the necessitous, without receiving any benefit in the shape of interest or otherwise. With regard to the institution of the Levites, its adoption was calculated to produce the most salutary effects on society. The Levites received tithes, it was true, but were the case properly examined, it would be found to be very different to the tithing system of the present day. As one of the twelve tribes, the house of Levi was entitled to its share of the land, but the sacerdotal office of its members having deprived them of that, and their whole time being devoted to the service of God, they were to receive, a tenth of the produce, which, in point of fact, was only their own share, had they been placed in the same circumstances as the other tribes. Nor were the tithes to be regarded as a mere compensation for the labours of the Levites; they were religious oblations, and as such were presented by the people. In like manner the Levites served, whether in the temple or in teaching the children of the people, not in consequence of any remuneration, but because it was the office to which they had been called by the Lord. Thus, the twelfth part of the people were the appointed teachers of the rest, and the children, whether poor or rich, received all necessary instruction, not at the hand of hirelings, but at the hand of religious teachers, under the operation of a motive furnished by the divine

commandment. The Levite therefore taught, and the child learned, equally under the influence of a religious motive.

When they looked at their religious institutions, they were equally struck with the wisdom of the divine appointment. For instance, in his peculiarities, the Israelite was operated upon by the best affections to the whole human race; for the separation and institutions of his nation were manifestly for no other purpose than to effect the regeneration of all mankind; thus he became identified with their condition. Again, if they turned their attention to the internal operations of those institutions, they would find them producing the same result among themselves. Three times in the year were they required to unite as one family in Jerusalem. Imagination only could present the picture in the vivid colours of reality. Let them conceive of the families of one town or village, consisting of parents and children, betrothed youths, supporting the aged, marching forward in exultation at the anticipated pleasure;—to what place? to Jerusalem, the mountain of the Lord's house, the habitation of his holiness. The poor and the rich, the master and the slave, and even the stranger, sympathizing in the same feelings, and banishing all distinctions, regarded each other as members of the same family. Let them imagine to themselves the group of one village joining on the way their kindred and friends resident in another, and renewing that interchange of affection which the absence of months had but tended to strengthen. And what was the occasion of all that bliss? To appear before the Lord! Thus, in every call, in every social duty, in every political relation, in every temporal interest, the word of God was the spring of action, and the cement which united them together. The same principle was to be found in their judicial system, their courts of justice were open to all; the poor and the stranger, as well as the rich and the home-born, could obtain redress; the witness gave his evidence, the judge pronounced the sentence, and the executioner inflicted the punishment, all on the mere ground of its being the command of God. Thus, the word of God was the instrument of man's generation, in every action of life. It was not to be imagined, however, for a moment, that it was by a mere act of obedience, in the discharge of the obligations which the law enjoined, that the people were to obtain the righteousness of that law; because that would be to make it result from works which must necessarily be imperfect; it was the result only of a faith which grasped the entire purpose of the law, in the establishment of the word of God, as the sole and constant rule of action. Thus did Solomon in Prov. vi. 23, compare the command to a *lamp*, and the law to the *light*. The command, in reality, operated but as a preventative, a stay, or a curb, to prevent a person from sliding backwards, and the revealed will of God was the only operator to impel him forward in the road to perfection. Thus, in Psalm xix. 8, it was said, "The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart;" but it was necessary to remark that the word rendered statutes was, *חוקים*, from *חק*, which

signified to remember, to reckon, an overseer, not wanting, &c. and thus represented the true office of a command, namely, to restrain ; and that it was so regarded by Israel, they had only to refer to an occurrence narrated in the *mishna*, the treatise on *rosh hasana*, or on the new year, *cap. 2. sect. 8*. Two witnesses appeared before the Sanhedrim to testify that they had seen the new moon of the month wherein the day of atonement fell. Rabbi Hanina, the son of Dosa, who was an astronomer, contradicted the fact from calculations he had made ; but Rabbi Gamaliel, the prince of the Sanhedrim, having heard the objections, ordered Rabbi Hanina to appear before him on the day whereon the day of atonement fell, according to his own astronomical calculations, with his travelling staff and knapsack. The Rabbi obeyed, on the ground of obedience to the law, which required that where the Sanhedrim ruled a question, it became law. When he appeared before Gamaliel, the prince rose and saluted him thus : "Peace be unto you, my master, and my disciple ; my master in wisdom ; my disciple, because you have obeyed my command." Whence it was evident, that the Sanhedrim was governed by faith in the law, and not by the testimony of their own senses. The Sanhedrim might mistake, but still that would not alter the principle ; their decision was received by faith in the commandment ; they did not legislate in addition to the law, but merely expounded its details, and applied it in particular cases. It was, therefore, on the ground of that possibility of mistake, that the oral decisions should not be committed to writing ; that was, lest the erroneous decisions of any Sanhedrim, destitute of the Holy Spirit, should be transmitted to posterity. Thus he had endeavoured to shew, that the design of the law was to create a field of action in every occurrence of life, for the exercise of faith in the word of God ; and that to separate spiritual concerns from temporal duties, was at complete variance with the object of revelation, and tended to counteract the purposes of God."

FINIS.





